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DEM GOOD OLE TIMES





Dem Good Ole Times



By

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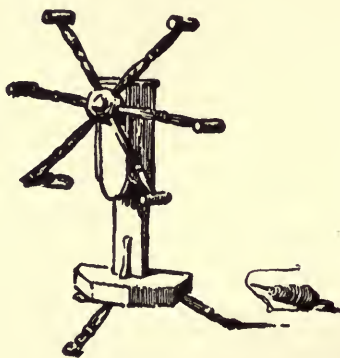
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In Memory of
THE
DEAR OLD SOUTHERN MAMMIES
WHOSE LOVE AND FIDELITY
WERE THE INSPIRATION OF THIS BOOK

May Mont, Va.

S. M. D.

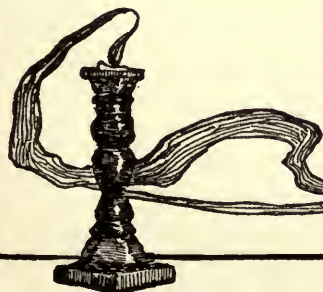


IST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

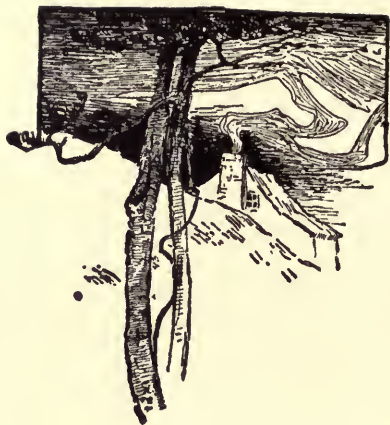
“ ‘ Miss mos live mongst her flowers,
un wharsomever she went, she were
de Queen uv um all.’ ” *Frontispiece*

FACING PAGE

- “ ‘ Early de nex mornin, we all semble on de lawn,
to pay our specks to de Mistiss.’ ” . . . 6
- “ ‘ Marster, what is we done, dat you should cas
us off dis a way?’ ” . . . 26
- “ ‘ Evy Sunday evenin reglar, Miss un de young
ladies have Sunday school fur de cultured
chillun.’ ” . . . 42
- “ ‘ Soon’s she git in sight, dey drap taters un evy-
thing un run to tell her howdy.’ ” . . . 60
- “ ‘ Sho nuff dar sot Peter un de possum, one in de
chur, un tother on de fire.’ ” . . . 72
- “ ‘ She took he han un talk to im, un pray fur im.’ ” 82
- “ ‘ Early de nex mornin, is I spectid, dey come
arter me again.’ ” . . . 86
- “ ‘ When Marse lef home he tell me to teck cyur
uv Mistiss un de chillun.’ ” . . . 90
- “ ‘ Daddy Ben.’ ” . . . 92
- “ ‘ Mammy Chloe.’ ” . . . 110
- “ ‘ Ole Mis un de young ladies cum down to read
de Bible to her.’ ” . . . 112
- “ ‘ . . . un always a big dance Christmas
night.’ ” . . . 118
- “ ‘ . . . he seed sup’n shinin white flewed in de
top uv dat tree.’ ” . . . 122
- “ ‘ Much is I could do to suade little Mary to
come long wid me.’ ” . . . 128
- “ ‘ Mammy little baby chile, doe cry—Mammy
jes goin home.’ ” . . . 132









CHAPTER I

“**G**RANDADDY, de win is howlin roun de house, un de snow is comin down, but I gwy roas you some sweet taters, in dis hyur big fire, un bile a strong pot a coffee fur yo supper, un while we’s eatin, you kin tell me bout dem good ole times befo de war, when ole Marse un ole Miss wuz livin. ”

“Yas, Honey, I try to tell you about dem times, caze dey is always wid me, but when I thinks dey is gone, un kin nuver cum back no mo, pears like my ole heart is empty is de aig shell de little chicken jes lef.

“Dem wuz times to live in; dese de times fur free niggers to strut bout wid a empty stummuck doin noth’n, un mos inginully, like de tarripin, wid all he got on he back.

“I members well de day Master brung he young bride home. Early de nex mornin, we all semble on de lawn, to pay our specks to de Mistiss. She come out all drest in white, un I knowed arterwards twuz de whiteniss uv her soul, shinin fru de skin, dat meck her look like de angels roun de throne. She shake hans wid we all, un tell us she gwy try to meck us happy, un how we mus

come to her whensomever we gits in trouble. From dat day, she nuver firgit her word.

"Our white folks wuz de quality. We own many a mile on Jeems River, un fur is de eye could retch, twuz ourn. De Coloneone house sot on a high hill, all by itself (dat huccum dey call it so, I reck'n) un de Jeems River bend mos all roun it.

"Twuz mighty big un 'pos'n—seem like it stan high up in de worl, sames de people what live in it. Is you look down at de bunance uv de craps, it put you in min' uv dat Sam—I ay speakin bout our black Sam, but bout one dem Bible ones, dat say, 'De valleys stan so thick wid corn, it meck de little hills laugh un clap dey hans.' Den when you see de long green medders, wid de fine slick horses, un de fat cattle un sheep, standin knee deep in clover, you say to yosef, 'De Queen She Bee un Soloman in all he glory, couldn't parade like sich is dese.' De cabins wuz at de bottom uv de hill, to one side. Dey wuz always kep neat un clean, un fresh whitewashed. Is you see um frum de house, dey look like big white snow-balls, done roll down de hill, un lodge mongst de trees. We all had de finis drive, frum de gate up to de house, you uver see. Twuz de Magnolia Abenue. A grassy lawn wuz lef right in de middle, wid a road on each side—one to go in on, tother to come out; un de magnolias wuz set in dat lawn, frum de gate smack up to de house. When dem trees wuz in

bloom, de whole place wuz so sweet, it meck de mockin birds mos kill deyself singin. But dey wor no happier, un did'n sing no louder den de nigger, caze he know fur sho dat water-million un blackberry time wor so mighty fur. On de outside uv bofe de roads dar wuz a fine row of elums. So ole dey say, is how Marse George Washin'ton un de Injuns wuz mo'n ap to sot un eat under all on um. Den jest outside de gates stood two menjous oaks. I hear Marster tell Miss he would'n teck noth'n in de worl fur dem trees, caze dey look like dey always got dey arms stretch out to welcome he friens. Mebbe dat de reason de house always full a comp'ny.

"Evy fambly had a nice cabin to deysef, wid a yard fur chickens, un a little garden fur vegables. We had a plenty to eat, a plenty to war, un mighty little wuck to do, caze dar wuz so many to do it. Whar you ever hear in dem times uv a crazy nigger? Now de country is full on um; pears to me like dey all crazy. Now dey has to wuck for deysef, un think fur deysef, un took cyur of deysef, un dat, wid freedom, is mo'n iny nigger hade kin stan. Dar nuver wuz de time, on dat plantashun, when you could'n hyur somebordy laughin un singin, un dar wuz always some kind a frolic on han. Ef twornt a fumeral, twuz a possum hunt, less'n twuz a prar meetin, or a dance—sho to be one or tuther. Sometimes a candy stew, un a weddin for a varigashum. Dar wuz health un happiness evywhar.

At de house twuz dinners, un suppers, un drivin, un ridin, un de young ladies walkin bout, wid de gempmun joying uv deysef. Look like de birds in de trees war no happier den we all.

"We wuz always glad to see comp'ny come, un still gladder to see um go, caze den de silver dollers wuz scatter roun, same's acuns fallin off de trees. All on us use to raise chickens un aigs un things, un sell um to Miss, at de highis market price. Sometimes her things use to git mix up wid ourn, but dat did'n meck no diffunce; we sell um jes de same. I rickerlick wunst Liza Jane's hen went to settin, but she nuver sot but a week fo she lef de nes. Liza Jane were powerful stresstid bout dem aigs, but she did'n say nuthin. Den orn-beknownst to inybordy, she tuck em fur to sell to Miss.

"She say, 'Liza, what meck dese aigs look so dark?'

"'Law! Miss, tay noth'n marter wid dem aigs, scusin de hen wuz black, un she lay um on de dark uv de moon.'

"So Miss bought um. De nex day, de cook broke um for to meck some cake; she see dey wor fitten to use, case dey wuz all done spile; so she show um to Miss, un she sarnt for Liza Jane.

"She say, 'Liza Jane, you ought to be shame uv yosef, to sarve me sich a trick is dis.'

"'Hi! Miss, twor noth'n de marter wid dem aigs, ef you use em right. I nuver know you gwy

“‘Early de nex mornin, we all semble on de lawn to pay our spectts to de Mistiss’”
(See page 3)



meck cake outen um—I meck sho you want um fur nes aigs.’

“Miss look solum un say, ‘I wo buy noth’n mo frum sich a ornliable omun is you, but when I wants inything nice, the other servans kin sply me.’

“Dat cut Liza to de bone, caze Miss look hurtid, but she did’n spoke a cross word, un Liza know she done wrong. Min’ what I tell you, Honey, meanniss will sho sarch you out ontwell tis squenched in dat uverlastin fire herearterwoods. Evy cultured puss’n on de plantashun know dat Liza Jane nuver had no luck wid her fowls dat yur—dey wuz all tun upside down kinder giggersome like. All uv de hens gin to crow, un de roosters dey sist on sott’n; some de aigs did’n have no yarllers, un tothers wuz bedout whites.

“Den all her chickens gin to droop un dwingle, ontwell she loss evy one on um, cep’n a ole rooster. He wuz natchully white is de snow, but mos all he feathers drap off’n im, un dem wuz lef, tun coal black. Liza Jane neighbors tell is how he poke roun, den stan still on one foot, un cock he hade sideways gazin at de sun, wid a awful curisum look in he eye.

“Nobordy nuver see him eat nuth’n, un ay hear im crow none ornjorin de day, but soon’s uver midnight cum, he jump on top de house, un clap he wings un say:

Ha, ha, ha, Haha;
What you doin dar!
Ha, ha, ha, Haha;
You tote spile aigs too far!

Jes pintly agivatin Liza un makin fun on her. He tormint dat omun, twell plum daybreck. One night she could'n stan it no longer—she ups un flings sup'n at him un kilt im dade. Whar he drap dar he lay, ontwell de tuckey buzzards cyar im off. Nobordy dars'n totch im, caze dey know he were sho conjured. When Miss hyur how misfortnit Liza done bin, she gin her some mo nice chickens, but she low, de conjur wo nuver be took off'n her, ontwell Miss buy some uv her aigs agin.

"De apple mout a temp Eve, but, Honey, don't you nuver furgit it, dat chickens un water-millions is bin de ruinashum uv mo niggers un inything in dis worl, scusin freedom.

"I wuz de hade gardner, wid three or fo to hope me, un we nuver do noth'n mo'n ten to de lawn, de flowers un de scrubry. In de busy season, Marse use to ax de loan on us sometimes. Miss low us to go, un den agin she did'n, pend on de portance uv de wuck roun de house, wether she could spyar us or no.

"Miss mos live mongst her flowers, un wharsomever she went, she were de Queen uv um all. Many a time, I seen her pull one un look at it hard, like it is tellin her sup'n, den tun it inside out un tar it all to pieces. Sometimes fo it scatter to de groun,

she put it to her lips like she do de baby's han, un like she sorry she treat it so. Wunst I say, 'Miss, please'm tell me huccum you tar de flowers up dat-a-way?' She say, 'Ben, dats de skyunce uv Botomy.' I say 'yas'm,' but I ay know no mo what she talkin bout den de jaybird in de trees. Miss wuz mighty high larnt, un could talk some two or three lanmejigs, un dat were one un um, I reck'n. Evy day de sweetis, finis rose on de place, wuz cut wid de mornin jew on it, un put by her breckfuss plate.

"Somebordy sarnt her a white rose bush, frum way cross de water, un she sot mo sto by dat den all tothers put together. It did'n have no name when it come, but arter a while, evybordy call it de Mistiss rose. Twuz always in bloom un de whitis, sweetis flower on de place, jes like it namesake. Ladies cornstant ax fur a slip uv it, un Miss tell me to cut it. I gives um slips uv all tothers; but nary one did dey git uv dat. Den arter sich a time, dey ax me huccum dey rose ay hansum like ourn. I says, 'Well, marm, dis de truf: a heap pends on de sile, un jes is much on de man dat wucks it; dis rose would'n look de same nowhar else.' We always had de fus un de las vegabuls, un de fus un de las fruit; evybordy roun, specialty de poor un de needy, speunce de bountichude uv our home.

"In dem days, ladies un gempmun nuver know what twuz to sell noth'n. Ef dey had things to spyar, un dey always did, dey give it free is ar; now dey even sells milk. Den nobody nuver hyur tell

uv a lady wuckin, scusin scratchin a little roun her flowers wid kid gloves on. Dese days mos on um has to wuck un took cyur uv de men, less mo dey-sef. I nuver see a lady, what had ever cornshesen to put her own shoe on; de maids done dat. Dey jes went bout like de angels, dressin fine un doin good. Evy gempmun know, he fuss juty un pride wuz, to wait on de ladies, un to took de bes cyur on um so's de sun could'n scotch um by day, nur de moon by night; eben de win wor low'd to totch um too rough. De nices un bes wuz always fur dem, same's we pick out de warm sheltered places, fur de lilies un de violets. Flowers un Ladies is much de same; dey blooms better when dey in de right place un well tended, caze tis a poor flower dat have to be bruise fo it give out it natchful sweetness. Once a ole lady wuz stayin wid Miss, un she un Marse wuz tookin a walk in de gardin. All uv a sudden a April shower cum up. Marse snatch he fine coat off un fling it roun her, un she wor so good lookin nuther, un when de rain po down de faster, un she could'n git along no spryer, he jes natchully kotch her up in he arms un run orntwell she got to de house. Dese times de men mos inginully in such a hurry to meck money, ef dey seed a ole lady drap in de mud, dey would'n stop to hope pick her up—like dem Bible folks, de Republicums un de Scari-sees, dey cross over on tother side. De whole worl dun tun tocksy-turby.

“Dey say now, a nigger jes good is a white man,

dat de erf am squar un de sun do move. One dem medlin white men frum de Norf, cum long tother day when I wuz at wuck, un ax me sup'n, un I tole im what Marse Charles say—he ole marster's youngis son. He say, 'What you call him Marster fur? You jes is good is me, un jes is good is him.' I says, 'Yas, sur, I knows I jes good is you but I ay good is Marse Charles.' He nuver ax me no mo queschums.

"Las week, Jim cum back frum Richmon; he brung de news dat he did'n see nary horse nor mule de whole ornjorin time he were dar. He say is how all de carrigis un buggies un things jes natchully go long by deysef. Dey tell im de rich folks puts excentrixty in um, un dat meck um go. He nuver know zackly what dat is, but he say he sho tis sup'n awful curisum. But what beat all wuz, one of dem critters dey call de ortomobiliaus. Dey skyur you so, dey keep you bilious all de time, un dat give um de name. Law! chile, you pintly ought to hear Jim's speunce uv dat thing. He say it cut mo capers un a Texas mule; it start off un den stop, den pear to start again, un back; den shoot ahade un tar long wuss'n a wile bull un fus thing you know, it done whirl clean roun un flop over in de ditch. One uv de gempmun what wuz fling out, come mighty nigh cuss'n is he got up out de dirt—he say, 'Confoun dis eternal mash in (infernial machine).' He low evybordy gits outen de way uv um, caze dey know dat dey

sesst uv a evul sperit. Even de folks dat rides in um is kinder tetched in de min; dey sets up wid dey faces red un dirty, dey eyes shot tight, a holdin dey bref, un dey hyar a flyin evy which a way. I always hyur dat de devul un money is de root uv all evul, un it sho to sprout up in jes sich things is dese.

"Jim ay live wid he wife in a long time un ay know whar she at. Dey tell im she in Petersburg, un he kin talk to her over de foam, un ornderstan zackly what she say. He say, 'I doe blieve no sich foolishness is dat, but ef I doe has to git no closter to her den Petersburg, I ay min tryin.' When dey call her up, he put de handle uv de foam to he yur, like dey tell im, un he mouf to de hole un say, 'Sucky, is you dar?'

"Wid dat Jim tun pale un lead a mo drap. He splain: 'Dat sho is Sucky! caze soon's ever she hyur me she holler back, "You no count rascal, ef you doe git away from dat foam, I come over dar un buss yo hade open."'

"Now, Honey, Grandaddy done tole you nuf to-night. I's tired un wants to git to bade. Sides, I blegged to be up yurly to-morrur mornin, to ten to sup'n fur Miss Mafy, caze you cyar trus dese hired hans—dey got too much larnin to do nuth'n cep mischuf."







CHAPTER II

“GRANDDADDY, is you gwy tell me some mo to-night, bout dem times befo de war?”

“I dunno, Honey; I nuver wor able to rickerlick much on a empty craw. Ef you fix a rale good supper, it mout unloosen my tongue to de chune uv de good ole times.”

“How would you joy some dem nice rolls un cabbage, what Miss Mary bring you, ef I het um up good un hot?”

“I always loves our white folk’s cookin, caze dey use to de bes, un wo have noth’n else. De kinder high-fur-lut’n cookin dey has now, wid dem outlandish names, is all name un noth’n to eat. Dars de sickafree chicken—what is dat? Tay neither fried, nor briled, nor yit stewed—a kinder mixtry uv all un noth’n much at dat. Pears like dat cabbage I jes eat, sooth my stum-muck un settle my min. Twuz de middlin done it; ole Virginny middlin stan jes is high over Westum poke, is possum meat do over coon.

“You ax me what we all use to do when we come home in de evenin arter de day’s wuck wuz over. De ole omun, ef she wuz iny ways dustrus un

frifty, always had a good supper fur her husmon un chillun. Sometimes, twuz a cherry dumplin or a apple pie, long wid a stew; den agin it mout be a barbecue hyar, un sich, un always a plenty a vegabuls. Ef de weather wuz iny ways mil', we all sot outside de cabin door, de ole ones smokin un talkin, de young ones pickin de banjur, laffin un dancin de jig.

"De young bucks, de'likelies men on de place, use to have what dey call de ole Virginny breck-down. Dat wuz a big time sho nuff for de culleded folks, same is a circus. Dey mos inginully pick out a Sadday night, when de moon shine bright, un vite dey friends un mo particlar dey sweetarts, to see de formance. Dey all put on dey bes Sunday-go-meetin clo'es, un semble under de great big oaks, un wid de mockin birds a singin un de banjurs a ringin, de fun begin. Uv all de cuttin up un kickin up, dat sho wuz de beat—look like Satum let loose. De ole ligus folks clar twar noth'n but de devul's wuck; but some on um sist twar no sin bein is how you did'n cross yo laigs. De one dat hilt out de longis un bruck down all de tothers, took de cake, un had de pick uv de gals.

"We all use to spen a heaper time uv evenins, in de winter, a vistin one a nur, less'n twuz mighty cole, den sich uv us is had de sense, stay at home, un pile de lorgs on de fire. We nuver had to be sparin uv wood, nor nuth'n else is I knows uv, caze twuz all Marster's, un he had a plenty to vide

wid evybordy, less mo he own. He did'n know what twuz to be stingy to his servuns. Dat we did'n have, we ax fur, un we sho to git it, if we zarve it. De men sot roun de fire smokin de pipe, less'n dey feel like doin some little job fur dey fambly; de wimmen folks wuz, mos inginully, busy sewin un knittin un fussin wid de chillun, bout how dey mus pop de corn, un roas de gubber peas un sweet taters, dat wuz always on han. When-somever comp'ny drap in, what we sot much sto by, we always han roun apples un simmon beer un things, un ef dey wuz fus class, de ole oman wuz mo'n ap to fotch out ginger cakes, or mebbe a punkin pie. When night come we nuver wuz too tired to joy ourself. Dar warnt a man or omun on dat plantashum, what ever done a rale good day's wuck, scus'n ornjorin harvis time, un even den de meanis wuz proud to tuck in de fruits uv dey labor.

"When de fus lazy, sickish spring days cum, I know sometimes, I use to drap down behine de lilac bushis to took a nap. Miss kotch me at it too, but she pear like she did'n see me, caze she know I wor gwy sleep long. She were dat kine, Gord bless her! she shot her eyes to de evul, but she always see de good. Iny time John Peter stop he wuck, un Marster see im walkin up un down de gullies, un in de bushes, un ax him what he doin, he say, 'I jes tookin cyur uv Miss' fowls, sar. I seed de tuckeys un de guineas a usin dis

way, un I thought I mout find dey nes.' Marster smile un shake he hade—he know what John Peter up to. He done dat trick so much, he got de name uv Guinea Peter.

"I wor married den, but I bin takin notis some-time uv a ginger-bread-colur gal name Dilsey Dina, what ten to de cows un de milk. Whensomever we meet one a nur, we pass de cornflimints uv de mornin. She ax me, 'How is yo flowers dis mornin?' 'Dey is fine un sweet,' I say, 'un how is you gittin long wid de cows un de milk?' 'Dey is well, un de milk jes is fresh un sweet is yo flowers.' Dat sorter please me, un I thinks to myself, dat gal is smart un handy. To-night I gwy see what she think uv me. Cordin to dat, I put on my good clo'es, what I keep in sage un horsemint, fur to meck um smell sweet, un starts to her house.

"When I gits dar she were sottin under a apple tree. I brung some lasses candy long wid me, to hope pass de time un to sweeten her up a little. Tay nuthin draw a oman closter to you, den a little candy un a plenty a praise. Now tay no ways de same wid a man; turbaccer un whiskey is what gits him.

"While we wuz talkin un eatin, I say kinder onconsarned like, 'Miss Dilsey Dina, I comes fur to offer my objecshums to you, un to splain dat you is de onlyis gal I scorns to look upon, fur you is de simmon uv my eyes, un de possum uv my

heart. I gives you my bordy to tend un mend fur, un my soul to love an pray fur, to be jined togethure in de holy state of ole Virginny, un in de bounds uv solemn macrimony, twell death us do de partin.'

"She jump up un her eyes far shine. She say, 'Who is you nohow, un who give you de parmi-shums to stend yo tenshums to me? When I wants a coon, I ruther tuck one outen de woods, stid uv a house coon sich as you.'

"I says, 'I much bleegeed to you, un I's proud uv yo becidjum, caze a coon suit a ornmannered varmint, like you, bettern a gempmun what doe do nuthin cep wuck in flowers.'

"Wid dat she juck up a chur un flung it at me, but I dodge un get away quick is I could.

"Dat gal see de day she sorry she did'n cept uv me, caze she sich a wile cat, her husmon had to beat her cornstunt. I wor no ways down in de mouf un cast away, case Dilsey Dina deject me. I knowed dar wuz jes good fish in de sea is ever walk on de sho. So I turn my intenshums to a rale nice little brown gal, name Ginny, Miss' seamstruss, what sew fur de house. She wuz so neat un tidy-some, un so peert un quick in her ways, she got de name uv Ginny Wren.

"Twor long fo I seed in suadin uv her to mate wid me, but when de time come she low, is how I have to wait ontwell she do is her Mammy tell her.

"I ax her, 'What dat?' Cullered folks so curisome, I niver know what wuz comin.

"She say her Mammy done tole her, niver to marry no man whatsomever, ontwell she seed in her sleep, two nights han runnin, a clar stream a water, fallin over a broad snow white rock. De water sigumfy de happiness dat will be hern, un de rock de sho foundation she stan on, ef she take de right puss'n.

"Fus thing I ax her evy mornin, 'Is you see de water un de rock? She shake her hade, un tell me she ay see nuthin. It went on dat a way mo'n a yur. I fotch her all de salty things I ever hyur tell on, mo particular de salt herrin, un she niver drink so much is a drap of water, ornjorin de day, so is she want it so bad, she mout dream bout it uv nights. Den de las thing fo she go to bade, we tote white rocks twell we mos had nuff to buil' a house. But seem like she could'n see um in her sleep. By dat time I wuz plum woed out, un I tell Ginny, I wor like dat gempmun in de Scriptur, what wait so long, he could'n tell one sister frum tother, un den had to took bofe, caze I wor gwy wait no longer, un ef she fraid to trus me, I know'd somebordy been meckin eyes at me, un sendin me ginger cakes un things, what would be monstrus glad to git such is me, ef she niver seed no mo water long is she live. Dat brung her to her right min', un brung her quick sho. But to dis day I's got powerful little use fur water. Ginny gree to

git marrid soon's she could. Miss un de young ladies at de house hope her un gin her a heap a things, so twor long fo she wuz ready.

"Miss say we could be marrid in her parlor, un she would git her own preacher—she were Pistocal—eff'n we choos'n. Dat jes suit Ginny, caze she always love white folk's ways, un she say, dey marrige wuz a mo serisome un everlastin bizness den de cultured people's. Dat were a fac in dem times. But now dey tell me, ef you got a plenty a money; you gits what dey call a voce, un husmons un wives change one a nur whensomever dey please, sames de birds. Miss tell Ginny, she go gin her de weddin garmint, un ax her what culur she want it. Ginny wuz like de budderflies; she love de brightis culurs, so she choose red. When de day come un de precrashums wus all done, Ginny went out to dress hersef. She low, white ladies always war oringe blossums on sich casions, un bein is how she could'n git none a dem, it peared to her de oringis would be jes de same is de flowers, un a sight pruddier. So she pick out de finis she could git un sew one on each shoulder uv her dress, un one right in de middle, de biggis, she tie on de tip top uv her hade—she always were tasty, Ginny were. Den we march in toguther, un we had to go mighty slow un stidy, caze Ginny skyured bout dem oringis drapin off er. De room wuz powerful full, but I ay see nobordy, ontwell I stop plum befo de preacher.

"When I look up, sich a sight is he wuz! Dar he stan wid noth'n on scus'n he night gown. I lead a mo loss my bref, but I pull he sleeve un say 'Marster, you done furgit to put on yo clo'es.' He bite he mouf, un he shoulders shake, but he keep on zortin un prayin un jinin us toguther.

"He say, 'Ben, will you take dis oman to be yo awful wife?'

"I speak up quick, 'Ob coas, Marster—dat what I ax her fur.'

"Ginny niver loss a oringe twell we mos frough; den is she bow her hade de biggis one roll off un knock de preacher book clean outen he han. I try to cotch it, but I could'n, un seem like dat mek de cumflusticashun but de wusser. When twuz over, we all wuz vited to Aunt Beckey's to a gungeous supper, un dar we stay eatin un frolickin mos all night. Marse done tell us, we kin have a week hollurday fur our honeymoon, but bein is how dar war no moon jes at dat time, we ax im could'n we tuck de hollurdy all de same fur a little trip.

"We cide to go see my Mammy, what blong to ole Miss—Marster's Ma. Dey wuz powerful glad to see we all, un treat us mighty good, but arter two or three days, me un Ginny gits homesick un wants to git back. We splain to um dey need us at home, caze I knowed twor nobordy to ten to Miss' flowers same's me. When we leave, ole Miss sen us in her wagin, un gin us a little pig,

some sweet taters, un sugar un corfee. It run in de blood uv our fambly to be kine un good.

"When we git to our own little cabin, we open de doo, un could'n go no further. Dar wuz red un white cutt'ns on de winders, a nice little table, un churs, a set a white chiny, un forks un spoons un mos evy-thing fur house-keepin, eben a cubburd in de cornder. My Marster un my Mistiss done 'vide all dis fur us. Ginny look at me un say, 'Ben, ef we ay good un faithful to our white folks, we ay fittin to live.'

"We had all we want, un twarnt nobordy on dis yuth happier den we all.

"Outside de winder, de little wrens wuz busy, un singin in de honey-shuckles all day long; inside my Ginny Wren wuz doin jes de same, wid a heart jes is light un free. Honey, I cyar spec to meck you ornderstan bout dem times, caze you ay nuver had no Marster un Mistiss to larn you, un to took cyur on you; nuthin but a poor pascel a free niggers what had mighty little, un knowed still less. But dar nuver will be sich agin dis side a Heben.

"Things went on like dat a good long time, but dey could'n las foruver. Our little chile wuz tuck sick wid de hoopin cough. Ginny nuss him day un night, wid Miss to hope her, un Marster he come down too, un gin us money fur to git whatsomever de baby want.

"But nothin did'n do no good; he git weaker un weaker, twell at las he lef us. Ginny's heart wuz

mos broke, un she could'n eat nur sleep. Miss try evy way to comfut her, un tell her how de good Shepherd had took de little lamb into de everlastin fold, whar dar warn't no mo pain un death, jes green pastures un still waters with His han to lead him in dat promis lan. But Ginny did'n took no intrus in nothin; she loss' all her churful ways. Den Miss say, mebbe ef she tuck her in de house, un low her to nus her own little Mary, she mout git better, un twuz jes like she say. Soon's uver Ginny tuck dat chile in her charge, she say, pear like her heart start to beat agin, un frum dat time she love it sames her own. Ef de chile wuz iny ways cormplainin, Ginny wuz mos stractid. She low, she would die iny day, to save dat chile's life, caze she be dade now ef twor fur her."

"Grandaddy, is dat our Miss Mary, what take cyur on us now, un so good to we all?"

"Yas, Honey; she favor her Ma, scus'n she ay so hansum is she were, doo she hard to beat at dat. I ricklick one day Ginny had her out on the lawn—she wor no mo'n eight monts ole—she sot her on de grass under a big oak tree, while she step to a bush to pull a flower fur her to play wid. I wuz tother side de tree, un is I look roun I seed a great big mockerson snake—one dem pisenus ones—cawlin to dat chile, wid he hade mos in her lap. Pears like I tun to stone. I could'n frow else I hit de baby, un dar war no stick handy,

so I creep a step or two un grab im by de tail. Cose he bite me, un much is I could do to shuck im off my wris. Ginny run screamin to de house close by, un Marster he come out wid a bottle uv whiskey, un meck me drink it ontwell I did'n know noth'n. When I open my eyes de fus thing I ax, 'Did I save dat chile?' My arm swell up mos big is my bordy, un I wuz sick in bade two weeks. De doctor say I come mighty nigh dyin, un I sho would, cep'n fur de good nussin I had. Marster un Mistiss scacely lef me day nur night. Arter I got well Marster sarnt fur me one mornin. He say, 'Ben, you been a faithful good man, un now you wuz willin to give yo life to save my chile. I am goin to set you un yo wife free, un give you somethin to start on.' I look at him in distonishment, un say, 'Marster, what is we done, dat you should cas us off dis a way? Now I know fur sho, dat de ole sarpunt is de devul—he mos kill me, but doe let im tun us out'n de gard'n uv Edom, un stroy us alto-guther. Dis is our home—we cyar live nowhar else. We wants to wuck fur you, long is we live, un, please Gord, arter we die, we hopes to be wid you in Heben.'

"Marster wuz so full he could'n say nuthin, but he tuck my han un squeez it, un put he hankchuf to he eyes. Den he tell me to think bout it, un whensomever I wants freedom, I kin git it.

"I ay nuver study bout it sense, cef'n to thank Gord I wor like dem free niggers in Chesterfiel,

what would a starve long go, ef twor fur de white folks always a hopen um, caze dey mos live on herrin hade hash.

“Dat wuz long befo I uver hyur tell uv de omun dat writ bout Unc Torm Cabin. She must ersoshate wid mighty mean niggers, un powerful poo white trash, to git sich noshuns is dem. She un John Brown—some say he wuz black; I dunno caze I ay nuver see him—better had a stayed at home, un min dey own bisness, stid er comin down here upsott’n things, un tryin to riz a reserreckshum mongst we all, what dey doe know nothin bout.

“Now dey done sot us free, pears like dey doe know what to do wid us, no mo’n we know what to do wid oursef. Cose dar wuz some bad Mars-ters; but whar dar wuz one bad one, dar wuz mo’n a hundud good ones, un de wuss wor is mean is de cullered folks is now to deysef. Mebby it do some good to larn de cullured people fur to read un write, so’s dey can’t cheat un squingle one a nur; mo’n dat is a disumbantage—it jes put no-shuns in dey hade, un meck um onmannered un no count. Dar is mighty few Booker Washintons, un dey is powerful lonesome, caze dey ’bove dey own culler un ay nigh retch up to de white folks.

“Honey, when I’s dade un gone, don’t you nuver low nobordy ’suade you to go Norf, fur to live. Mebby you gits mo wages, but you ay nuver know what a day’s wuck is, ontwell you draw de Yankee’s money. Tis mos like teckin his blood, un you



"Marster, what is we done, dat you should cas us off dis a way?"



pintly has to be up un a doin fo dey think you zarve it. Soons ever fall come, up dar, you gin to shake un freeze, un you doe thaw no mo twell mos summer. Den dey speak so short un look so cole at you, you feels fros-bited in yo feel-ins all de time. You wucks un eats yo bread, but tay wid de sweat uv de brow cordin to de kermanmints. Tis too cole up dar fur iny kine uv persrashum whatsoever, un whar you is so sichumvatid you has to go gin natur un gin Scriptur, you better lef on de fus train un go back home to Dixie.

“De Yankees is powerful fond uv we all, when dey is dar un we is hyur, but soonsover we gits iny closter, dey ay got no mo use fur us den a rabbit got fur a tar pot. De Souf is de place fur quality white folks, un fus-class darkies; tis de lan uv Goshum, caze it flow wid milk un honey, un possums un simmons, un de bes uv evything what is appetit’n. Whar is dar sich anuther place, dat you walks through de woods knee deep in jewberries? Un when you come out in de road, all you got to do is to retch out yo han un bring it back full er blackberries.

“De Simmons no whar grow so sweet—

Ez in Virginia;

Un dar’s no whar sich Possum meat,

Ez in Virginia;

De Nigger’s heart is always light,

Caze dar is little wuck in sight,

Down in Virginia.

“De folks ay no whar else so kine,
Ez in Virginia;
De weather ay no whar so fine,
Ez in Virginia;
You nuver pestered wid much clo'es;
You drap down inywhar un doze,
Down in Virginia.

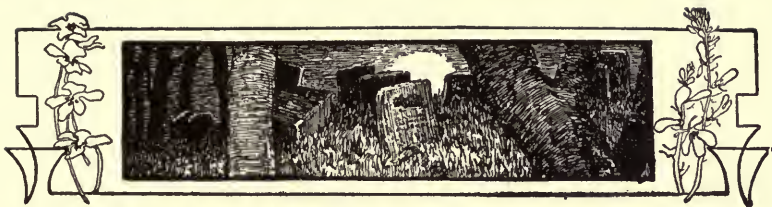
“De millions no whar grow so big,
Ez in Virginia;
De sile so light we sildum dig,
Down in Virginia;
“Un whar yo home so good un sweet,
Dat Heb'n un yuth bofe seem to meet—
Dats ole Virginia.’

“In de season, wharsomever a nigger have to go,
his nighis way is always fru de watermillion
un de mushmillion patch. Dar dey lay so thick
un fine, he jes natchully bump gin um, un squish
um open.

“Whende morkin bird kill de June bug, fo he eat
him, he fly up in de ar un sing fur joy; so de nigger
when he see de red meat of dat million, un feel de
sweet juce runnin fru he fingers, jes like de bird,
he open he mouf wide un sing:

“ ‘Ham bone am sweet, beats all de meat,
Possum am vey, vey fine,
But give me, oh! give me, de bestis thing uv all—
Tis de watermillion hanging on de vine.’ ”





CHAPTER III

“**I**S JINNY min’ settle down quiet like, she say she wor riz a monimint, on de mem’ry uv our little Ben. She low she doe wor look no ways stuck up un arified, un like she done tuck too much pattern arter de white folks. So she say she gwy ax Miss bout it, un she tell her twuz all right, un dat it show de right sperit. Den she clude to go straight long un do it bedout no delay. I ax her is it gwy be white like some I done see. She tell me nor—white marvel suit white folks, but bein is how our chile were dark, she ay gwy put no misgreeunce twix him un de stone, un she gwy try to git it to match im, nigh is she could. Ginny always were mighty tasty un jedgmatical, Ginny were. When it come we wuz mighty proud on it, caze twuz a brown slab like she want, wid a nice quiet sheep on top’n it, un de piece uv potry she done writ fur to go on de stone, wuz dar too. Huc-cum Ginny so smart, she nuver git her school larin frum no cultured folks. Miss un de young ladies gin it to her, so she could read un write good is inybody.”

"Grandaddy, I disremember bout dat epicalf; could you tole me what tis?"

"Cose I nuver gwy furgit dat. Under de sheep wuz writ:

" 'In lovin memry uv what use to wuz—tis little Ben.

" 'Here lies de bordy uv po little Ben,
We ay gwy see im, in I dunno when;
Twuz hard to part, but it could a bin wuss,
Caze Ben mouter bin a no-count cuss.'

"We ax Brer Isuck—he de plantashun preacher—to form de ceremony uv sottin it up. At fuss he flat fuse to have noth'n to do wid dem marvel wucks, caze he low twuz gin Scriptur, dat de Bible say, 'Marvel not,' un he done teck notis tis mos always a graveyard biznis inyhov.

"Den Ginny splain to him dat de Bible say, 'Marvel not, my bretherin,' un nuver say a word bout de sistrin, what wuz spornsible fur dis job.

"Den he low he would'n spute no mo bout it, un ef dat wuz de case, he cept uv de privdige, un mighty bleedged to us fur de cormpmints. Me un Ginny want things done quiet un peacable like, but Brer Isuck sist, is twar nary nuther one like it, no whar roun, twuz jue to dat monimint un to de dade, less mo to hesef un de whole plantashun, dat de glory uv dat casion should shine in de face uv de whole country, caze you mus'n hide yo light under a bush nohow. De nex sunshiny Sunday, by time we all got to de cullured buryin

groun, dar wuz a cloud a witnissis aroun; un still a comin frum een to een uv de county. De tellin nigger done bin roun, un spread de news frum plantashun to plantashun. I nuver see so many niggers toguthur befo, whar dar war nuthin to eat nur drink.

“Brer Isuck tuck a heap on hesef, un wuz de ‘cock uv de walk,’ dough me un Ginny vide de entertainmint, caze we pay a sight a money fur jes a piece a stone. But de sheep un de potry wuz what meck it cost, I reckon.

“Arter he strut roun, shakin hans un showin hesef to evybordy, on count uv he good clo’es, den he call de meetin to order. Den he say, ‘Sisters un brothers, let us all jine in de ole familus hymn, dat our people bin singin evy sense we lef Africy, un it suitable to dis cashun; caze twuz de corpse’s favorite.’ Den he gin out a verse, ‘I’ll be dar ar-a-ar, I’ll be dar ar-a-ar, when de genul role is call, I’ll be dar.’

“Is de singin went on, Brer Joe un de tother leadin members lay de cornder stone, un sot de toom on top’n it. Den Brer Iuck riz up in he might, un show de tower a strank he were in Isrum. He say, ‘My sistrin un brethrin, one much is tother, we semble hyur to-day, not is wanderin los sheep, but like a rejicin flock, dat know de little lambs is safe frum de stroyin wolves dat prowls aroun. We cum to sot up a monimint to dis favored little one, dat so long is de worl stan, evybordy kin know dar

he is. Tay many cullured remains dat has dis tenshun paid um, un tay frum lack a feelin nur dispomsition nuthur, but seem like de want uv money cramp de heart, well is de han. My brethrin, I ax yo respects to dis pint, when dat grief-stractid sister say hyur *lies* de bordy, she doe mean dat little bordy is tellin ur lies—it would'n ef it could, caze it nuver done dat when twuz livin, un jes could spoke a few words.

“‘Dat were a mos orncommon good chile, un nuver cry fur what it want, but ax for it un always got it fo it cry; uv sich is de kingdom uv Heben, un dar be few like im. Un I tecks dis casion to say, whether tis de fault uv de mammies ur de chillum, I dunno, but dis one thing I does know un kick ginst, dat down dar in de quarters, uv July nights, twix de bull frogs un de cryin babies dar ay much res' fur nobordy. Den dat potry go on fur to say, “Poo little Ben”—now, my friends, I sho tay nary heart in dis big crowd, less'n it mighty sin-soaked, dat doe feel tender to evything dat's little, specialty de wimmin folks; dey knows how close de little things gits to you. Un little Ben wuz monstrous little un got littler fo he die. Den come de true Baptis, Chrischum resinashum what I is proud on, when de stractid mother tell is how tis hard to part, but it could a bin wuss, cose tis always hard to part wid inything (doe meck no dif-funce what it mout be), caze ef you doe want it yo-sef, tis hard to think somebordy else gwy git it.

But ef'n you stick to de narrer path a juty, un feel un ac right, you mo'n ap to git yo reward.

“ ‘Twuz jes so wid our reavdid sister. Twor long arter her little black sheep were tuck, fo a nuther white one wuz put in de vacum place, caze Mistiss tun over her own little Mary to her to nus un ten. Un now she same's her own. But mo'n dat, I looks a hade, wid de prophit's eye, un what I see? Tis a angel a mussy ef dat chile spyared, took'n cyur uv dem agid parrunts, caze she a chip uv de ole block, un dat block nuver fail yit. But my brethrin, I has to prepyar you fur dat, dat's comin. Tay so greeble is what have gone befo, un I wish de fus had bin las, un all de time; but I nuver shucks my juty, un so I bleege to stick to de tex. De las word uv dat tear-strick'n potry is git me stalldid, caze no sef-spectin, cornshentus Baptis preacher dars'n tuck dat word in vain. He lowed to teck a heap, but not sich is dat. I ay castin too much blame on de reavdid mother, caze she a oman, un dey is weak un ornliable, bedout de spornsibilitytniss uv we men. Den agin, a heaper lowance have to be made fur potry, caze it kivers a mulchude a foolishniss. Dars a heap in it on count uv de soun, dat doe mean noth'n. But de sense un de soun uv dis word is all right; tis de strank uv de same what fen de yurs uv de meek un richus, sich is me.

“ ‘My Brethrin, de low-sinkin sun min' me dat I mus cut short dis dress un bring it to a close. It

ought to min' all on us dat we will be low un sinkin too, fo our lights goes out furiver. We cyar do no better den dismiss de meetin wid de same soul-sarchin hymn, "I'll be dar." "

"On de way home Ginny low, she ay nuver speunce de same sef-satyfacshum, dat she feel like her soul soarin on de wings uv peace un plenty.

"Den she say is how evything happen fur de bes, caze ef'n Ben had live to be a man, he nuver would a had is much fuss made over him, less'n dey hang im, un dat would a bin a mighty bad accydent. De cultured folks buryin groun wuz mos de han-somis part uv de place. Yurs ago, Marster's Grandma pick it out un sot it aside fur de pup-pose. Twus sitivated on a hill mongst fine ole trees uv evy kind, but dey did'n keep out de sun by day, nor de moon by night. De dorgwoods un de red buds wuz so thick, dat in May, dey look like banks uv pink un white snow. Seem like de birds un de wile flowers love dat quiet place de bes uv all. Dar wuz scarcely a tree bedout a nes', un always supp'n in bloom, from March twell mos Christmus. Is dey come long in ro-gashum, violets, wile pansies un buttercups kiver de whole place wid purple, pearl un gole. De good Lord Hesef meck buful de restin place uv de meek un lowly. De darkies say de flowers give up de secrets uv de grave, caze de flowers dat grow on top'n it mo'n ap to tell what de puss'n wuz, dat lay in it. Ef twuz buttercups, dey say he were

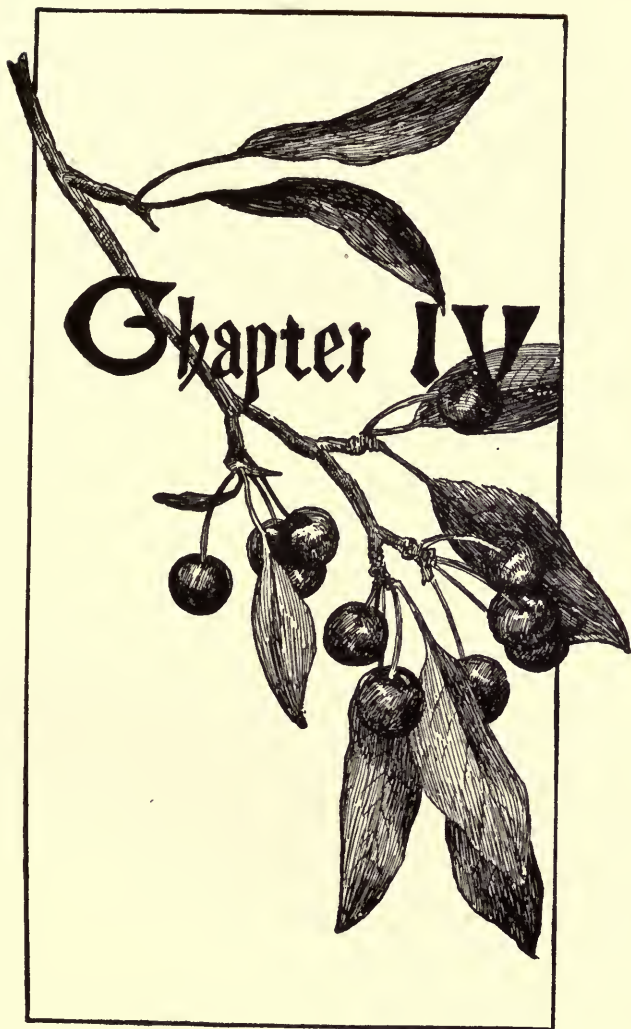
greedy uv gole; ef twuz pansies, dey show he heart at ease; ef twuz de little wile furgit-me-not, he were faithful un did'n furgit he juty; but de blood-red cardmul flower wuz a turrible sign, caze twuz de devul's torch un lit by de soul beneaf. Dem flowers wor no ways numersome, in our skim-etry, but dey say de one on de plantashun jinin ourn, wuz mos run away wid um. I dun teck notis dey mos inginully grows in low damp places, so I meck Ginny promise me ef'n I die fus, she'l see dat I's laid somewhar high un dry.

"Speakin uv fumeruls put me in min' uv what Jim tell me bout Richmond when he were dar. He low tis de greatis place to live in he uver struck on count of de cheapness uv watermillions un fumerals. He tell me de niggers kill deyself eatin, un den you tun roun un ride to mos many fumerals is you choose, bedout even putt'n yo han in you pocket to pay nary cent. He say, he nuver did have sich a good time befo, caze one day he went to three on um, un wor no ways quainted wid de remains.

"Talk bout dat pen-in-de-cetis, he low de water-million-eatis cyar off mo niggers den all tother citisis un getisis put toguther."



Chapter IV





CHAPTER IV

“GRANDADDY, did you all use to go to church un de Sunday school befo de war?”

“Go long, chile, cose we done dat. What you reck’n we Baptis fur, ef twant to pray un shout wid one nuther at de meetin house? Ef you stay at home it nuver profit you noth’n, no matter what you wuz. I done teck notis dat ligion sets mighty light on de stummuck uv de puss’n what nuver goes to church. He so smart, he spec to go to Heben his own way, jes like he done made de road, less’n he stay way, caze he feel out a place in sich good company. He so blind he doe even know de devul leadin im. De mole doe know nuther dat overhade is de blessed sunshine.

“Ligion ay eben de rale thing now it use to wuz. Cullured folks had to starve deysef un pray un seek, sometimes a mont or mo, fo dey come fru. You had to be right good un serisome, fo you could meck up yo min’ to go under de deep, dark

waters what de Baptis souge you in. But den when you git it you had it. Now dey go to church bedout ever wraslin wid de devul, or loss'n a moufful, un gits sprinkled like de white folks, un comes out what I call ready-made Chrischums. It doe las long, caze what come easy go easy. Tis like de seed on de rock, dey come up but doe byar no fruit, caze de root is lackin.

"Evy Sunday evenin reglar, Miss un de young ladies have Sunday school fur de cullured chillun. Sich rubbin un scrubbin is de mammies give dem chillun Sadday night, to meck um spry fur de nex day! Dey mos inginully wo little caliky frocks un white apuns, un ef dey skin wuz mighty black, dey mammies use to grease dey face to meck um shine.

"One evenin Miss un de chillun wuz on dey knees at prars—dat de way she always open de school—un Betsy, de blackis little pigadinny on de place, come runnin in un holler: 'Mistis, Mistis! Mammy say please'm scuse dis piece a hyar she done tie up so tight on top'n my hade, caze my frote am sore un my palit done down, un dis de onlyis way she know to pull it up.'

"Sometimes you see five or six on um, wid dey hyar tied up like snouts on de tip top uv dey hade, caze twuz de quickis way to git de palit up, ef'n it fall down. But white folks ligion nuver did gree wid cullured folks, un dey did'n have much use fur it less'n dey wuz mighty sick un bout to



“‘Evy Sunday evenin reglar, Miss un de young ladies have Sunday school
fur de cultured chillun’”



die. Den dey always want Miss, un she hope many a poor soul cross dem stormy waters over to de shinin sho; night er day, rain er shine, when-somever dey want her, she sho to come.

"Betsy were a bad chile, un is she growed up, she were ontied from de rack. Nobordy could'n do noth'n wid her. We all talk to her un try to suade her to git ligion, but her min' wor sot dat a way. Arter she weed a wide row, she low she gwy do better.

"So one night, when we wuz all at prar meetin, Betsy went up to the moaner's bench. Arter we all jine in prar fur her a little while, she jump up un clap her hans un say, 'I got it, I got it! tis right here in my breas, un jes is sweet is honey in de honey comb.' Wid dat she holler un shout un rip un tar, sames she done gone clean stractid. I ay nuver blieve in all dat rackit, caze de emty cyart is always de one dat rattle de loudis un meck de mos fuss. Den she give in her speunce, like dey ax her. She say, 'De night wuz dark un de way wuz long un tegersome, un is I stumble long fru de thorns un briers un fall over de rocks wid a bustin heart un a bleedin foot, pears like I see a rooster black is coal, jes out er reach er my han, un is I try to ketch im, he tun to a black cat un run in de bushis. I keeps on, ontwell I come to a g-r-e-a-t big watermillion layin plum in de paf. Den I meck sho my trouble wuz over, but is I bruck it open, de meat tun to brimstone un de juice tun

to fire; it bun de bref clean outen my bordy un I drap down in a fit. When I come to, I wuz hangin over hell on a horse hyar, wid de devul standin right under me ready to kotch me on he pitch-fork. Sisters un brothers, dat wuz a parlous time. Sometimes, is de horse hyar trimble un shake, I meck sho I bleege to drap in dat bottum-liss pit. Den I holler, loud is I could, "Doe totch me—I'se a Baptis, un you ay got no place down dar fur Baptis un fur water, caze I see all kinds a folks down dar scusin Baptis un niggers." Twarnt nary one uv dein no whar roun. Is I keep on a tellin him dat, pears like de strank come to me to riz up un run, un dat huccum I hyur now.'

"Den de sistrin un de brethren all cum crowdin roun her, to sten de right han uv fellowshif, un tell her to keep on is she begin, un to let dat buful speunce shine like de blazin sun, ontwell it put out de darkniss uv de worl, de flesh, un de devul. Twor long arter dat soul-sarchin speunce, dat one day Mistiss wuz walkin bout de place, un she see Betsy stuffin hersef un her pockets wid de churries, she done ordered should'n be totched, case she want um fur some tickler puppus. Betsy try to git way, but Miss stop her un ax her what she doin.

"'Noth'n tall, Miss; jes zaminin dese churries, to see ef dey ripe nuff to teck to de house.'

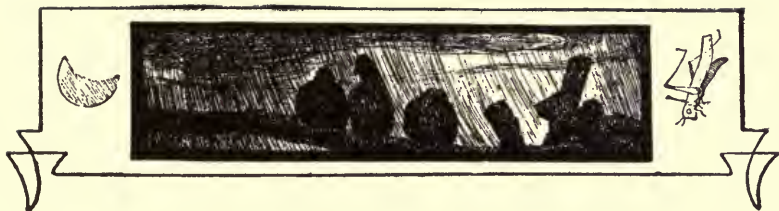
"Miss say, 'Ah! Betsy, I saw you, un I hoped, now you say you is a Chrischum, un had got rid of de ole Adam, dat you would'n do sich things.'

“‘Law! Miss, I is got rid uv de ole Adam, but pears like Miss Eve, she still stick to me. She tuck de apple, un I tuck de churries. Fo I got ligion, I use to steal de churries un swaller de seed, so nobordy could’n know noth’n bout it: now I eats de churries un spits out de seed, so evybordy can see dar dey is; cose dat ay no harm, caze tay ’ceivin nobordy.’ She wuz de wuss un de mos ornreliableis omun on de plantashun.”









CHAPTER V

“OLE Mars mus a gin de doctor a sight er money, to ten un took cyur uv all de peoples on dat place, Grandaddy?”

“He nuver done no sich a thing, caze folks wor onhealthy den is dey is now. Nobordy nuver hyur tell uv dem outlandish zeases, de men-in-de-gi-tis un de pen-in-de-ci-tis what flyin bout in de ar evy-whar, ready to 'tack you unbeknownst, un when you leas ways spicion it. Den nobordy nuver had noth'n, scus'n de chillum wuz sometimes flicted wid de hoopin cough, or mebbe a little disorderly stummuck, but all dey had to do, wuz jes to spurge um wid catnup tea un raw inguns, un dat soon cure um. Wunst in a while de ole folks plain uv de rheumatiz in de jints, but soon's uver dey carry a rabbit foot in dey right-han pockit, un a frog-tongue in dey lef-han shoe, it knock de pain clean outen um. When you live on ole Virginny meat un Jeems River cabbage un inguns, twor no casion to be sick, un you warnt nuther.”

“Well, Grandaddy, we know a powerful heap a things dat you all ay nuver hyur tell on.”

"Sich is what?"

"We knows when tis 'gwyne to rain, un snow, un be cole, un evything like dat."

"Huccum you know we did'n know dat? Wuz you dar? I hyur a heap er talk bout dat thing in Washinton—I blieve dey calls it de 'Weather Bureau,' I ay sho, but tis some kind a funiture—it mout be a wash stan. Dey say it kin tell you zackly bout de weather. I ay blieve no sich tales is dem. De Yankees is mighty smart, un I hyur is how dey use to meck sich wooden hams, dat de horg hesef did'n know de diffunce, but when it come to meckin a piece a funiture what kin tell all bout de weather, I's kinder dubisome. But sposin is how it mout be so, tay noth'n to brag on. 'Tis mo like flyin in de face uv Provvince, un dey mout be like de gempmum in de Bible what buil' de tower so high, a visimatashun wuz sarnt on um, dat meck sich a cormflusticashun, dey could'n no ways ornderstan one a nuther. Tay right to try to know too much un to go too high; de high-flyin kite is sho to git tangled up, un come down a bustid. Evy ole puss'n on de plantashun, what had rale hard horse sense, knowed how to zarn de signs uv de weather, doubt conjurin a piece a funiture fur to tell im."

"Grandaddy, how did dey know?"

"Whensomever dar bin a mighty long dry spell, un you see de grasshopper mos standin on he hade, un wuckin he laigs backuds un forruds, backuds un forruds, he drawin water from de yuth fur de

clouds, un you kin pend pon it, de rain ay so fur off, un you gwy git some fo long. Den agin, ef it bin rainin priddy stiddy, un pears like tay nuver gwy hole up, ef you watch de moon un she swing roun todes de norf wid bofe horns up, is she set, doe be orneasy in you min bout de wet, caze de horns is holdin up de rain, un it blegged to be fyar un dry."

"Did you know bout de snow un de win too?"

"Dat war noth'n to know, caze evybordy big un little, what had fros-bited toes, know when dey itch un bun, dat snow wuz in de ar, un gwy soon tell um howdy. Is to de win, tis powerful on-sartin un mysterisome, jes like de Bible say. It blow whar it will, fus in de norf un den in de souf. Sometimes it whisper un den agin it howl, but it doe tell nobordy whar it come frum, nor whar it gwine. Eben dat Bureau doe tend to dict whur or no de winter gwy be long un cole. We all knowed dat dout axin no queschums. In de fall uv de yur is you walk under de trees un mongst de bushes, un you teck notis dat dey full uv acuns, un nuts, un berries, un when you zamin de wile varmints un de fur stan close un thick on dey backs, you know de good Lord done 'vide bountiful fur all He dum critters, un less'n you mighty no-count yosef, you doe stop to argify, but you go home un wuck on de wood pile, un chink up de holes in de cabin, caze fur sho de winter is gwine to be a frizler, sames you say de summer is a sizler when de sun shine brilin hot."

"Well! Grandaddy, how does you know when to spec a mil' winter?"

"Little Ginny, whar is yo sense un yo school larnin nohow? Ef dem things is when dey be, cose dey aint when dey doe be."

"Grandaddy, did you larn all dat sense frum de white folks, or did it jes nachully grow in yo hade sames de hyar grow on it?"

"Honey, I ay so powerful smart, yit un still, I ay no common nigger nuther. Twuz dis a way: I come frum a mighty good, ornis, dustrous fambly, un when I wuz born Mammy sot a heap a sto by me, un say she gwy meck sup'n extry outen me, ef feed'n un whup'n would do it, caze you mus'n spyar de chile nohow. Dey say ole Marster had mo un knowed mo un mos inybordy in de country. Wharsomever he walk, arter he git out a sight, Mammy meck me walk plum in he tracks, ontwell I lead a mo drap; den evy day she pay de butler up at de house, to fetch her all de scraps what Marster lef on he plate, un she feed me on dem to de scusion uv evything else.

"De cullured folks say dat huccum I so smart, dat ef'n dey chillun done had de vantigis uv Marster's leavins, dey be jes is good is me. Dat mout be de trufe, caze sometimes, when my foot slip in de wide crookid ways, I remember dem tracks I use to tread in, un de eatins frum Marster's plate, un de good tase dey always lef in my mouf, pear to come back to my stummick un fly to my back-

bone, whar it settle un gin me strank to riz up un walk in de paf uv peace un plenty. It meck um all mighty envus un jeolosum, when dey see how proscus I is, un soon's uver dey git mad, dey call me Marster's black slop buckit! But dat buckit nuver leak none, un it hilt mo un dey uver got.

"Ef de darkies would study de book a natur, which am de Lord's book, stider de school book, which am de Yankees' book, dey would have sense in dey hans well is in dey hade, whar it doe seem to do um no good. De ole hyar is a ve'y spectable critter, long is he stick to de groun un de brier patch, but soon's uver he forgit hissef un try to fly, he come down jes like de kite I tell you bout, un even de buzzards laugh at im. Soons uver de sap riz in de trees, Satum gin to rise in de darky, un sho fofe hesef in de varisome wucks uv ornrichus-niss. Den de spring chickens stan mighty little chance, less'n de owner sleep wid one eye open. De hens git so smart dey stop cacklin when dey lay, un soons dey lef de nes de rooster come struttin roun to watch de aigs. De little chickens scratch un pick 'bout, un ay skyured a noth'n, nor nobordy, but let um git fryin size, un ef dey see a cullured man come long, dey scatter in de bushes same's a hawk arter um. Pears like sup'n tell um ef dey doe look out, de time is short twix dem un de pot. Coze de sef-spectin servants wus bove such tricks, but same's de bunt chile fred a fire, de chicken wid all de tail feathers jucked

outen im, un jes scape bein kotched, ay gwy teck no chances wid no puss'n uv culler. He tell all tothers, un dey gree mongst deysef bout dat. But is de long summer days go by, un cool September come long, wid de trees all red un yarller, de hymsects gin to sing dey own fumeral hymns. Dey mighty chirpy bout de bizniss cornsiderin, but I spec dey know dat arter dey friz to death un stay under de snow all de winter, dat soon's ever de spring cum, dey all gwy buss out de shell, un tun to dem flower-suckin budderflies un hummin birds. Pears like den de darkey heart git sorf un solumcholy, un he quit he evul ways un tun to de good things he knows is comin by'm by. De summer time sarve im mighty curisome; seem like it tun he inards outards, un you see im in all he natchul cussidniss; but I done notis, de longer dey live wid good white folks, de less de ole Afriky crap out."

"What is dem good things dey speck is comin?"

"Well, mebbe I kin tell some on um. Dar is sweet tater time, un dat is a fine prime time; den de corn-shuckin time, dat meck de nigger heart happy is a cricket; un de horg-killin time, which am a good greasy time fur sho; den de coon un de possum hunts, dat give you so much fun in one night you wish you could live forivur, un nuver see noth'n cep possums un coons. Den come Christmas time, de las' un de bes' uv all, dat cap de climber's ax. Arter dat tay no mo to say."

"Grandaddy, when is you uver gwy tell me bout all dem gungeous times?"

"I dunno, Honey; I mo'n ap to splain dem mar-
ters to you some dese long winter nights ef I live,
un less'n yo eyes pop outen yo hade. You look
jes like a ole hyar, de dorgs done skyured up."

"Well! you norates de beatinis things uver I
hear tell on."

"Un den I ay tell haf. Us boys use to have de
bess fun, un de mos uv it, a huntin de ole hyars,
when de grown wuz kivered wid snow. Sometimes
we kotch mo'n we able to brung home. Un den
sich suppers! It meck my mouf water is I talk
bout um. Tis ornpssible to git um like dat now,
caze de cookin stove un de white cooks done ruint
de tase uv evything. A coon foot briled in a open
fire, on red hot coals, is bettern inything dem
Monicos up in New York kin do. Ef dey could
a tase we-all's eatins, dey would a quit de bizniss,
ontwell dey come down here, un larnt what wuz
what. Dey way my Ginny barbecue ole hyar,
would meck a dade man, ef he could tase it, riz
up out'n he grave un go hyar huntin.

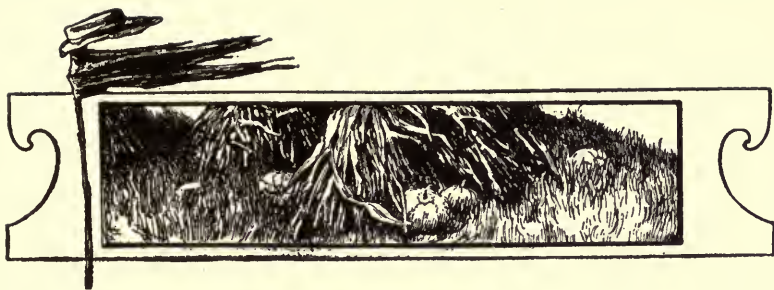
"Dat mine me uv de tale Dick tole long time ago,
bout him un Jim. He say, 'Me'n Jim wuz comin
long frum de wood pile one evenin un I seed sup'n
white runnin un a jumpin in de bresh. I say,
'Hi! What dat?'' I wuz jes all in a trimble,
case I meck sho twuz a hant, so I tun roun un run
tother way. Jim say, 'You fool boy, tay noth'n

cep'n a ole hyar done tun white, caze dar bin so much snow dis winter. Evy year when dar's a heaper snow, one ole hyar tun white, un inybordy kotch dat hyar is a happy nigger, caze he doe have to do noth'n a whole yur. White hyar does always put cunjur on wuck." Den me'n de dorgs un Jim lit out fur dat critter. Pears like he run under evy bresh un evy rock on de plantashun. Jim he loss he bref un lay down, but me'n tother dorgs keeps on, un when dat hyar wuz plum woed out, we grab im. I kinder studies like un I say, "I gwy put some bread on de waters what I knows will come back. I gwy gin ole Miss dis hyar—all scus'n de lef hine foot—ay nobordy git dat caze ef you put a dade horse hyar roun it un let it res on yo bress bone, it meck de white folks sleep so soun, de chickens jes natchully drap off de roose in de bag." '

"I knowed a nigger wunst—Marse Lawyer Jones' black Sam—he say he gwy see ef snow wo meck him white. He walk in it, he sot in it, un he eat it, ontwell he wuz tuck wid sich a misery he had to go to bade. De doctor say he had de new moany in de side. He call it dat caze Sam moan so bad. He say Sam gwy die, but when he lef im, he mammy gin im some inguns un tup'ntime, un put a lizard skin on he foot, un Sam livin now; but he say he ay nuver gwy try to tun white no mo."







CHAPTER VI

“GRANDADDY, what wuz dat sweet tater time you say you gwy tell me bout.”

“Honey, when you ax me dat it sho meck me feel bad un pitiful like, case den I rickerlick you ay noth’n but a po little free nigger, dat nuver had de pledgers, we all wuz use to, when we wuz chillun.”

“I ay use to nobordy callin a me names nuther. You mout be a free nigger, but I ay no sich a thing. I’s Miss Mary’s maid, dat un noth’n else, un I gwy straight to de house fur to tell her how you buse me.”

“Honey, I nuver mean no harm. I jes feel sorry fur you, un I did’n went to hut yo feelins. You bleeed to be a free nigger un you disable to hope it, caze we all wuz sot so, but you kin duc yosef so, nobordy nuver fine ’tout. Is I wuz a sayin, Marse put mo groun in sweet taters den inybordy no whar roun, caze de servans eat um same’s horgs eat corn, un de cullured chillun bleeed to have um,

on count a keepin off de malarius. Arter de white folks wuz sply wid de biggis un de bes', un dey did'n snez at um nuther, de cullured chillun wuz tun loose in de fiel' to hep deysef. Early in de mornin dey start wid baskits un buckits un bags fur to pick up taters. Some un um wuz so little, dey could'n tote mo'n dey apon could hole, but dey all come, frum de littlis to de biggis. Frum de rackit dem chillun meck, laughin un hollerin un chatterin, inybordy comin long de road mout a thought swarms uv blackbirds done lit in dat fiel, fur to pick up dey own corn. On sich casions Miss mos inginully drive dat a way, wid de ladies frum de house, jes to see dem little happy black faces. Soon's she git in sight, dey drap taters un evy-thing un run to tell her howdy. She always had candy un sup'n good fur um is dey come up. You always know de way she bin long, by de good deeds she lef behime. Punkins am mighty good squshy things, un I ay findin no fault wid um, but dey ay no ways got de stayin power, like de sweet tater. Dey fills up mo chinks un crivicis in de stummuck, un is de mos sef-satisfyinis sweet thing dat grow. All de craps on de plantashun put together doe sply de same mount uv grejuncies is de sweet tater do. You kin roas un bake un fry un bile um, un den tun um into pudd'ns un pies un custuds, un ef you choose, you kin eat um raw same's apples.

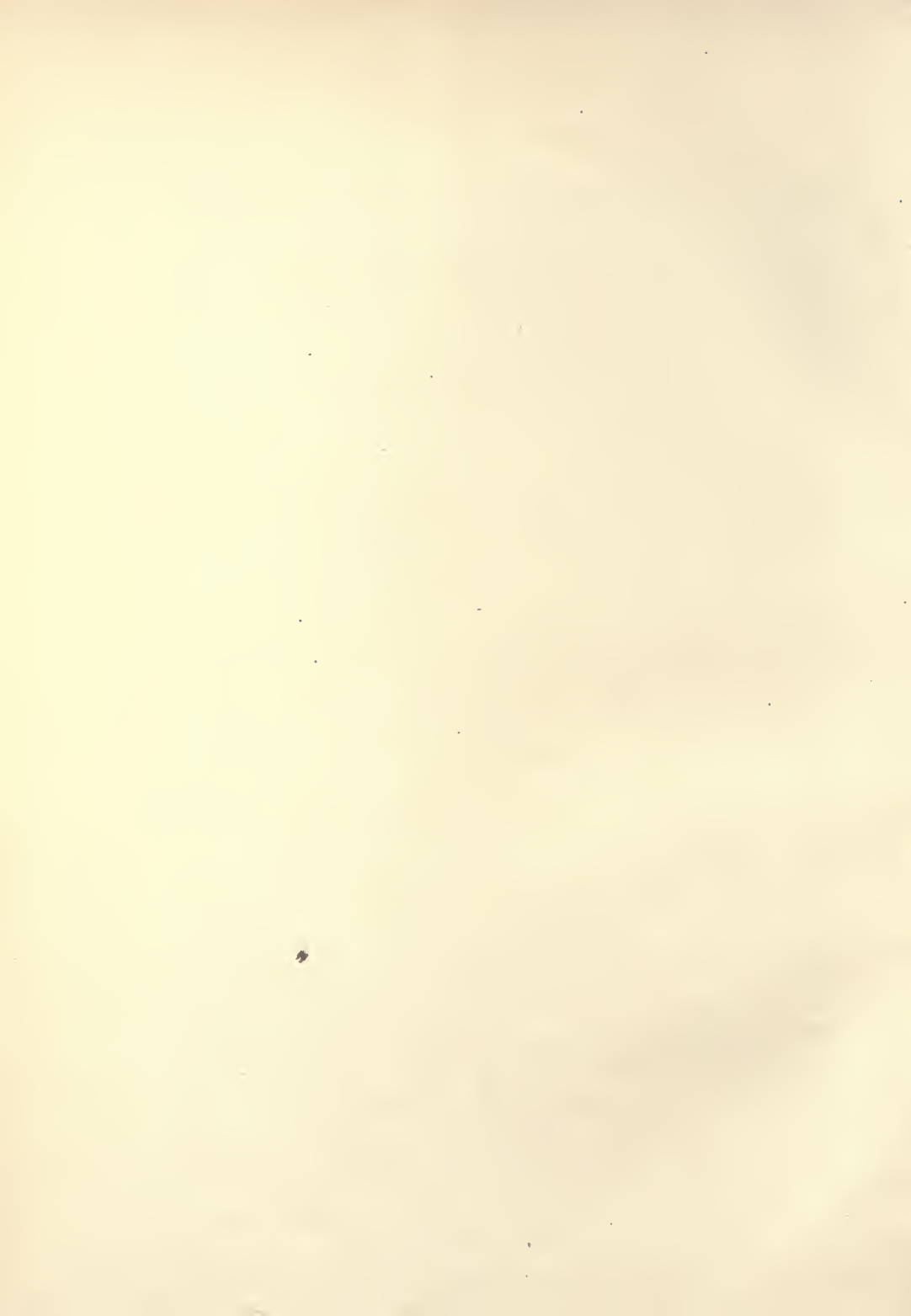
"De rale thing doe grow nowhar cep'n in ole Virginny. Dem roots dey call yams ay no better'n



“‘Soon’s she git in sight, dey drap taters un evything un run to tell her howdy’”

“Soon as the king saw that they were all dead, he was very sorry for them, and he gave them a good burial.”





biled orrish taters, wid sweeten water poded over um.

"Corn shuckin wuz mornstrous fun I tell you. A week or mo fo de time, de news gin to spread roun, when it gwy be. Twar no sich bothersome things in dem days is de tellin-foam; un twar no use fur um, caze de tellin nigger beat de tellin-foam all holler. Evy night reglar, twuz de darkies' way to walk bout all over creashum. Dey hyur evything un dey tell evything dey hyur, un a heap dey did'n. When de night come fur de shuckin, soonsever it git dark, de neighbors gin to drap in, un fus thing you know, look like dey done riz up out de groun un kiver de whole face uv de yuth, wuss'n locusis. Sometimes, pear like dar wuz mo niggers den corn, but we meck um welcom, ef dey did come mo fur what dey gwy git, den fur what dey gwy do. We all had de name uv givin de tarin-downis suppers in de whole country. Marse nuver low nobordy git hade uv him in noth'n. Is dey git het up to de wuck un pitch dey voice in dat rousin ole song:

"Come to shuck dat corn to-night;
Come to shuck wid all yo might;
Come fur to shuck all in sight;
Come to shuck dat corn to-night.

"Come to shuck dat golden grain;
Whar dar's nuff dar ay no pain;
Ef you shuck tis all yo gain—
Come to shuck dat golden grain;

pears like it shake de vey tops uv de trees, un set de leaves on de groun to whirlin un dancin un jinin in de frolic. Far out in de woods un on de hills, you hear dat chune a ringin, ontwell it wake up de mockin birds un dey answer back un fill out de chorus. Dey always cum down frum de house fur to hear us, un Marse say is how he done bin all over de worl, un hear de finis music what is, from de frorg-porn up, I think he say, to de bes' High-stallion hopper (Italian opera), but dis beat all. He say it meck he blood run hot un den cole, un den pear to stop runnin altoguther. Music am a mighty sarchin sup'n. It always put me in a trimble, whensomuver I hear Dixie un sunshiny things like dat; but cose it doe play de same tricks wid my blood, it do wid Marster's, caze his'n de true blue.

"Joe Clay were a powerful singer, un dey name im de cock uv de corn pile, caze he always stan on top'n it, un crow de loudis. One night he sing so loud tryin to show off fo de white folks, he loss he voice, un twuz mo'n a mont fo he come up wid it agin; he were de bal-headis nigger I uver come crost. Dey all say, he voice were so powerful, dat is he sing de strank went up fru de top'n he hade, un kill de roots uv de hyar, ontwell it all drap out un lef im on top, slick is a ingun. Hyar un grass is much de same; too much strank kill de roots uv bofe. But sho's you born, pride had a heap to do wid dat bizniss. You kin twis un tun it much is

you choose, but de Bible always come true, un de preacher say, 'Pride does go befo de fall.' De pride uv de singin come fus, de fallin uv de hyar arterwards. Brer Isuck say is how he knowed a omun wunst, dat grease her hyar wid ox-marrer, un it all drap out sames Joe Clay's, caze cose evy time de ox shed she shed too. But you see de man un de omun is diffunt: what 'fect one is mo'n ap to disinfect tother."

"Grandaddy, speakin bout de possum hunts, I always git mixed up wid de coon un de possum, un dunno tother from which."

"Well, you sho in a bad fix, ef you git mix up wid a coon un a possum. Dar is jes is much dif-funce twix dem, is dar is twix de foot un de han, But if you larn dis, tis ornpssible to meck a mistake:

"'Raccoon tail am ring a roun;
Possum tail am byar;
Rabbit got no tail at all;
But stumpy grow de hyar.'"

"Grandaddy, you does know sich priddy potry you mus a larnt de tase frum de flowers you wuck in."

"Nor, chile, I larnt a heap frum de flowers, but twarnt bout de tails uv sich varmint is dem. Doe I ay no ways belittle dem critters, caze dey all put hyur fur some good puppose, sames me. Day in un day out, is I wuck mongst de flowers, dey tell me a heap a things. I plants dem in de

groun, un pears like dey sows dey seed in me. I says to myself, 'Flowers is mighty pruddy un nice, but what good is dey inyhov?' Den when Miss come long, un I see de smile on her face, is she cut um fur de sick, un fur her neighbors what ay got none, I know den dey wuth all de trouble I tecks wid um. When I comes to de weeds, un jes chop um off to de groun, in two or three days when I see um agin dey done come up thicker un wussur den uver, den I says, 'Dat jes like sin—twoe do to slight it; you got to git 'tout by de roots, less'n you want it to choke out de good, sames de weeds does de flowers.'

"Den I larnt bout Miss Clover un Mr. Bee. Folks try to have clover whar dar war no bees—dey sow it un it come up in little patches un die; dey keep tryin, but twould'n do noth'n twell one day Miss Clover see Mr. Bee come long. She nod to him, un she look so fresh un pruddy, seem like Mr. Bee could'n git away. He hover roun un presenty he fly to her un kiss er twell she hang her little hade. Den he splain dat jes his way; dat all de flowers is his sweethearts, un mos un um is showy un fine un holds up dey lips fur kisses, but hers is de sweetis uv all. Dis please Miss Clover so much, she load im up wid gol' dus, he keep comin back, un evy time he teck mo gol' dus ontwell he scatter it all over de face uv de yuth, un now you see big clovers un little clovers evywhar."





CHAPTER VII

“**G**RANDADDY, I’s powerful proud to hear yo circumbrashuns, but please, sar, doe furgit de possum tale.”

“Well, Honey, de possum hunt stan out in de speunce uv a darky jes like de light house do on de river; tis all by itself, but tis dar to stay. Soonsuver Jack Fros bite de simmon, de nigger tooth itch to bite de possum; den when de cool October nights come, de boys meck a big fire outer doos, un stretch out roun it wid de dorgs, to tell yarns, un to meck preckrashums fur de hunts. Is de talk go on, de dorgs creep closter un closter, ontwell dey can’t stan it no longer, un den dey jump up whinin un barkin un lookin up in de trees like dey spec to see a possum dar, caze dey ornderstan dat talk sames de boys.

“I nuver will forgit one night, us boys start off wid de horns a blowin, de dorgs a yelpin, un wid de lightud knots a bunnin. De whoopin un de hollerin mout a waked de dade, but we did’n cyur who it wake, so it nuver sturb Marse un

Mistiss. We knowed bout a g-r-e-a-d big ole possum dat live in de woods some two or three miles up de road. Dis wor de fuss time we sot out to kotch dat possum; but he had mos much sense is human, un he so cunnin, time we lead a mo git im, he gin a grin un scoot. Jim tell im, 'Nuver min'; we meck you grin tother side yo mouf yit.' But when dat possum grin, twor no tother side. We cornstunt see his tracks un knowed whar he bin long, caze de simmons un de wile grapes did'n stan no chance. So we start off un say we gwy hunt twell plum day-breck, less'n we ketch im. Pear like we have it to do. We walk un keep a walkin, un ay see noth'n un ay hear noth'n. Den all uv a sudden ole Sambo gin a yelp un a jump, un we know fur sartin dat possum were meckin fur a tree. When we ketch up wid im, sho nuff dar he wuz, done clum way out on one de biggis limbs. De dorgs wuz barkin, un mos havin fits; un, you may pend upon it, we wor much better. Jim wuz mighty good at dat bizniss; so he low he'd git im. Up he went wid de hatchit, un cut dat limb fur all he wuth. We all wuz so busy watchin de possum we wor studyin bout Jim; fuss thing we know, down come de limb wid de possum un Jim all mix up together. Is dey strike de yuth, pears like dey bus it open. We wuz dat skyured we could'n move, but de dorgs had mo sense, un dey nuver low dat possum to git fur fo dey kotch im. Arter we see Jim jes bruck he laig

un wor kilt, we try not to let im see us, but we could'n hope it—we far roll on de groun un laf, to think dat fool nigger did'n have no mo sense den to cut hesef off wid de limb! Eben de possum grin evy time he look roun at Jim. He groan un tell us to teck dat grinnin devul out'n he sight. Dey say a ole fool is de wuss in de worl, but wait twell you come crosst a possum-huntin nigger; he tar all he clo'es off, scratch he eyes out, un mos breck he nake, fo he know it, when he arter a possum. But dat laffin I tell you bout, did'n las long, caze we had to git Jim home un tell Marster, un dat wor no 'musin marter.

“Arter we brung im back, dey put de privdidge to splain to Marster on me, caze dey low he mo'n ap to favor me. Twor no sich thing—he nuver meck no diffunce twix none on us. Twuz de dade uv night is I knock at Marster's doo.

“He say, ‘Who dat?’

“I say, ‘’Tis me, Marster.’

“‘What do you want, Ben?’

“Marster, I come fur to tole you is how us boys jes teck a little——’

“‘Jes what?’

“‘Jes kotch de finis possum you uver see sar, de one bin stealin all yo simmons un grapes un things, sar.’

“‘You wake me at dis time a night to tell me sich foolishniss?’

“I hear im tell Miss ‘Dat darky mus a gone crazy!’

“‘Nor sar, it de fattis, grinninis possum I uver see, sar, un I brung im to you.’

“‘Why did’n you keep it twell mornin?’

“‘Well, sar, he, ar-ar—he grin so pruddy un so cornstunt, sar, I fred arter I box im up, he mout loss he sperits, so I fotch im now.’

“‘Ben, what in de thunder is de marter wid you inyhow?’

“‘Marster, I gwy tole de truf un shame de devul. Dat smart frisky Jim, sar, had de misfortinit fur to hut he laig, but Marster, we got de possum all de same, sar, un de laig sho gwy men hesef.’

“‘Marster nuver wuz no cussin man, but dat night de words come so thick un fas, dey meck de ar so blue, you could mos smell de sulphur. But it en right dar, caze he nuver do noth’n cep git up un put on he clo’es, so’s he mout go down un see bout Jim. He nuver speak a cross word to dat fool, but he handle im jes is easy is a omun, un meck im comfurble is he could, ginst de doctor come. I mos wish I wuz Jim, to have Marster roun me like dat. He sich a gempmun, I ruther fur im to cuss me, un not teck no notis uv me a tall.

“‘Cornstunt uv nights, when I gits in bade, un tis cole nuff to pull up de blankits, what Miss gim me fo she die, pears like I kin hyur de boys a whoopin un a hollerin, un de dorgs a barkin un a yelpin, twell dey meck de woods ring once mo, wid de music uv de ole-time possum hunt. It all come back to me so strong, I forgits I ay young no mo, un I

jumps up un put my hade out de winder to listen, mos spectin to glimpse de houns, is dey go by like de win. But evything is still is de grave, scusin po ole Sambo—he keep up sich a pitiful howlin un whinin, like he tryin to call back de ole friens, what use to blong to de same pack, dat he always lead so spry. But de dorgs un de boys is all gone too—jes me un Sambo is all dat's lef uv what use to wuz. Bright days is I sets out in de sunshine, he creeps up close to me, un puts he hade on my knee, un when he look at me wid dem big solumcholy eyes, I know what he thinkin bout, un I pat im on de hade un tell im I members too, dem good ole times, when dar war nary nuther possum dorg in de whole country could tetch him. At dat he lick my han un wag he stump uv a tail, dat a coon done bite off, un furgits like me dat he done had he day.

“De possum talk put me in min' uv Guinea Peter. He could beat ay man ur oman on de plantashun, cookin uv a possum. But he would'n tell nobordy how he done it. Ef'n you eat it once, it so good, de ricklickshun stay in yo mouf, un tun yo stummuck gin all tuther vittles mos a munt. But he were a mornstrous sef-consarned, stingy man, un nuver would ax nobordy to eat wid im, less'n dey kotch im on de sly. He always keep a possum on han, un whensomuver we ax im when he spec to kill im, he shake he hade un say, 'I dunno—seem ornporsible to fatten dis possum.'

"I say, 'Yas, I reckon tis ornporsible to fatten im iny mo, caze he car-cus wo hole it.'

"One rainy day he kilt un clean it, un when night come twuz still powerful dark un drizzle-ty, un too bad, he meck sho, fur inybordy to drap in. Cordinly he let down de winder un bolt de doo, un put de possum on de fire. He mouf water un he han trimble, is de cookin scent uv dat critter smite de nose, un he think he gwy have it all to hesef. You may speck de cherry bird to fly roun de tree, dout eatin de cherries, un de darky to sot by a fire dout drappin off to sleep; but you sho git fooled, caze it plum gin natur. Twaz jes so wid Guinea Peter; is he watch un tend to dat possum, de fus thing he know, he did'n know noth'n caze de nods done overtook im, un when dat nigger git to sleep, you mout stan im on he hade un he would'n know it. Sam wuz jes is cunnin is Guinea Peter, un he spec sup'n wuz up, so he walk dat a way, un creep up to de winder. Sho nuff dar sot Peter un de possum, one in de chur, un tother on de fire. He put he han fru de hole in de winder, un arter he riz it up, he let hesef in easy-like. It tuck mighty little time to eat such a appetitin thing is dat possum, un when twuz all gone he tuck de leavins un grease Guinea Peter mouf all roun, un he fingers jes de same, un sot de plate a bones befo im. Den he slip out un lis'n.

"By'm by, Guinea Peter wake up un rub he eyes, he look roun but doe see de possum, den he smack

“‘Sho nuff dar sot Peter un de possum, one in de chur, un tother on de fire’”



he lips un tase he fingers, un say, 'Dis sho am possum grease un dar de bones, but ef I eat dat possum, it set lighter on my stummuck, un gin less satyfaction, un ay possum I uver eat.'"

"I clar fo grashus, Grandaddy, I doe blieve de Presdunt uv dese Benighted States knows is many funny things is you does."

"He know nuff to git back in he place twicest; tay many on um smart nuff to git dar wunst, scusin Mr. Cleveum un Marse Ginul Washinton; he be dar now cep'n he dade. He were a mighty smart man, but I ay so sho bout de good, caze he mus a bin powerful hard to git long wid. Evybordy know de ole sayin dat wid him, 'Twas a fuss in peace, a fuss in war, un a fuss wid de hearts uv de country folks.' Now, nobordy nuver would a put up wid all dat fussin, cep'n he wuz de son uv ole Virginny, un de Father uv de Country. I hyur heap er talk bout him un dat cherry tree. I boun twar noth'n but a sour saplin uv a churry, dat war no count nohow, un he know he pa did'n cyur noth'n bout it—one dem Muleriller kind, dat so sour it meck you cross-eyed, un pucker yo mouf up, ontwell you tongue-tied. I ay sput'n bout he could'n tell a lie, yit un still, ef'n he had all dat sense, cose he mout a tole lies, sames tother folks, un nuver got kotched."

"Grandaddy, what bout dat horg-killin time you all think so much uv?"

"Dat ay so much to talk bout, chile; tis mo what you call a big eatin time. But de ole Vir-

ginny horg speak fur hesef when he livin, un arter he dade, evybordy speak fur im. You doe git dat meat nowhar else, caze it teck de ole Virginny breed, un de ole Virginny acuns un corn, un de ole Virginny mud fur im to waller in, un den de ole Virginny cook to finish im up to make dat ole Virginny 'none sich.' Ornjurin de killin, de scaldin un de skinnin, un all dem greasy preck-rashums, soon's uver de darky, tetch de bade uv nights, he gin to laugh in he sleep, is he dream bout de tender, juicy inards uv dat critter. De horg am de poo' man's bes fren, not is I much quaintid wid poo' folks—I see um sometimesgwyne long de road; but ef'n I wuz poo' un did'n have but a dollar, I put dat in a pig, sho. Tis bettern de bank, caze dat do bus up now un den; but tis dif-funt wid de horg—he always roun you, un in dese ornsartin times, it wuth cornsidable to have yo ownins whar you kin retch out yo han un totch um. Den sposen he die fo he time, tay so much loss, caze you kin bile im up un meck sorf soap outen im. He de mos ekernomicalis, de mos increasinis un de mos yieldinis critter dat goes. He stroy all de trash un slops un weeds roun de house, dout botherin nobordy to tote um off; he always gittin bigger un fatter, un when he kilt, de yieldins is so numersome, you scarcely got de room to sto um. You kin eat im frum de yurs down to de foot, un sprang out to de tip een uv de tail. It pear to git better un better

is you come down, un it all so good tay none to fling way.

“‘We eat im hot, we eat im cole,
We eat im young, we eat im ole,
We eat im tender, we eat im tough;
Un yit ay nuver got a nuff.’

He live so close to poo’ folks, he larn heap uv dey ways. Ef you gin im sup’n he grunt, ef you doe gin im nuth’n he grunt, un whatsomuver you do, he grunt un cormplain. Ef’n he got thanks inside dey comes out in grunts.

“Sassy Simon, he were one uv dem up-un-a-cummin niggers, what put dey jaw in evything, un always tendin to evybordy business, scus’n dey own. He were a powerful greedysome eater, un one night fur supper he eat sossages, briled spyar rib, fried liver, un stewed haslit.

“Way in de night, he wake he wife un chillun up, groanin un moanin, un meckin sich er awful rackit, dey jump up un run to de bade. He look like he were dyin, ur havin fits, one tother. Dey shuck im, but he nuver wink, jes holler de louder. Den he wife say, bein is how he wor use to water much, ef dey fling it in he face it mout wake im, but it nuver. Den she low she hyur um say, ef’n you kin meck a man sneeze when he sleep, he sho to wake straight up, un she gwy try it. She wuz a mighty tryin, perseverunce omun, so she stuff some red pepper up Simon’s nose, un sho nuff, quick is uver he snez, he mouf un eyes pop open. She ax im,

'Simon, what in de name a goodniss is de marter wid you? is you drunk, or crazy, or is you comin fru? (She know he bin seekin). You done wake all dese chillun up, un skyur um stiff fur noth'n.' She were mighty orneasy in her min' hersef, twell she see twar no danger; den omunlike, her dander riz, un she gin to fuss un quarl.

"Soon's Simon could git he bref fur de red pepper—he mos snez he hade off—he say, 'I's had de awfulis night myar, un she rid me haf to death. I thunk all my toes done tun to pigs un de big toe wuz de sow, un she eat up all tothers. Is she bite um off un grine un crunch de bones, I feel de pain smack up to my back-bone. It wuz de haslet un de sossage what done it. I always hyar ef'n you mix de outards un de inards uv de same animule, it sho meck trouble in yo stummuck, caze dey doe blong in de same place, un cose dey ay gwy gree. Tis gin natur, but I wuz dat horngry fur dem appetitin things, I loss cornsciousniss uv de speunce uv tother folks, un I pay fur it, I tell you.'

"De Texus wile pony is a mean pesky critter, but *you* ride him, *ef you kin*, but de night myar dat comes frum too much pig meat, is a gray horse uv a nuther culur, caze *she* ride you ontwell you doe know who you is, nur whar you is, whether you dade ur live. Howsomuver, folks willin to ornjoe a heap uv misry fur de gratimachude uv dey stummuck. De sayin is, dat bread is de staff

uv life; but gin me meat evy time. De staff is a good thing to lean on, un to walk wid, but whar you gits a plenty a meat, you run so fas' you doe need no staff fur nuth'n'. I ay no ways abraggin, but we sends our Virginny cured hams un Albarmarm Pippins clean cross de water to Queen Victorius. She sot so much sto by um, she eat um all hersef, un say dey de bes things she uver tase. Ef she smack her mouf when she eat um dar, what would she do ef she could git um cooked like Sary Jane have um! I reck'n she be mos ready to lef de frone, un come over hyur to live wid us, caze inyhow, orneasy lays de hade dat wars de crown, scus'n de cropper crown chicken—she always lays easy. ”









CHAPTER VIII

“**M**UCH is we done scuss, dese long winter nights, you ay nuver tole me bout dat war what sot you free, Grandaddy.”

“It nuver sceed in sot’n me free caze I would’n be sot. You kin lead a horse to water much is you choose, but you cyar meck im drink. Freedom ay noth’n but comin un goin when you please, un dat pruddy much all de niggers do—come un go. I ay cyur to think bout de war, les mo talk bout it.

“I aygwystir up no strifewid Mr. Roosumfeltum un dem folks in Washinton, caze ef dey spishun what I think bout dat war, it sho meck trouble, un dey mout sen down hyur un put me in de pen-ten-try. Inyhow, ‘leas bruck soonis mendid,’ un tay no use butt’n yosef up gin dese Benighted States nohow.”

“Grandaddy, you ay blegged to tell noth’n to kick up a row, is you? I got to hyur bout dat war, un ay nobordy gwy tell it straight un sensible is you, caze what I gits from you, sho is right.”

"Well, Honey, is you so sistin, I mout splain bout what happen to me ornjorin dem parlous times. 'Twaz one day way back yonder—pears like it bin mos a hundud yurs—Miss wuz givin me some structions bout de place, un' all uv a sudden, seem like one dem westum cycoons done struck us. We look up de road, but could'n see noth'n fur de dus' un de rackit. But we know soon nuff twuz one dem Yankee raids, caze we done hyur dar wuz a *powerful* battle at Sasfrus Bridge—prut nigh kilt Joe Ginnins. When dey bus loose un tar roun like dat, you mout a thought de devul wuz arter um, ef'n you did'n know he wuz wid um.

"Two on um rid up to de house, un one look at me un say, 'How you do, ole Skyur Crow?' I say, 'Howdy, Buzzard.' Den wid de 'surance uv de ole Scratch, dey tell Miss dey want sup'n to eat un drink, un dey want it quick. She tell um she gin um what she had to eat, but she did'n have noth'n to drink cep water. She done sen evy drap uv liquors un wines to de horspittle fur de sick sojurs. Dat buzzard say, 'You lie.' I nuver hyur no mo; quick is it lef he mouf, I knock im down un jump on top'n im, wid my fis flyin roun he hade same's lightnin. Ay no tellin what mout a happen, ef Miss had'n stop me.

"Tother one done had too much to drink a'ready, but time he spy a Jimmy John, sett'n by de kitchen doo, he juck it up un drink mos a pint a kaysene

""She tuck he han un talk to im, un pray for im'""



ile, fo he know twor whisky. Den he went down de hill un lay down un die. Soon's Miss know bout it, she run in de house un git medicine un things, un meck we all go down dar wid her, to see what she could do to save he life. She wuck on im two ur three hours, but twor no use, —he die fo de doctor could git dar. She tuck he han un talk to im, un pray fur im, un den he look up in her face un say, 'You's a angel a mussy; Gord bless you, un furgive me.' Mistiss tend to all de fumeral rangemints hersef, un when she could'n git no preacher, caze dey wuz mighty scace, same's evything else in dem times scusin trouble, she stan by dat grave un read de prars, wid de tears a streamin down her face. Arterwards I ax Miss huccum she so stresstid bout dat man. I say, 'Miss, you know he come down here to do us all de harm he could, un to stroy all we-all's propty.' She say, 'Ben, mebbe he wuz a good man at home, but fell in bad compny un bad habits, when he jined de army. But sich a turrible death is dat, un so far frum his home un friens, would tetch a heart uv stone.' Miss had me cryin too, fo she done, but dey wuz de fus un de onlyis tears I uver wase on Yankees.

"Miss low she blieve he gone to Heben, caze he die prayin, but you can't git de cullured folks gree to dat nohow. Cornstunt uv dark rainy nights, down dar whar he buried by de river, we all sees a light riz up, like a great big kaysene ile lamp, un

walk up un down, backuds un forruds, ornrless-like; den it pear to jump in de river to put hesef out; but yit un still, it always cum out a bunnin jes de same, caze it teck mo water den Jeems River to squench dat ornnatchul fire. Dey low tay no use talkin, it speak fur itsef—he bleegeed to went to a mighty hot place, else de ile could'n a kotch'd fire. Gal, what you trimblin un shakin dat way fur? Is you sick?"

"I mos dade, I so skyured. Please, sar, doe tell me no mo bout dat hant. Does you spec it come to-night?"

"I dunno, Honey; ay no countin on dem things; dey is mighty ornsartin. Ef folks know when to spec um, dey mos inginully be somewhar else. But dey doe nuver bother chillun sich is you, less'n dey mighty bad; tis arter you git harden un sorter sin-soaked, dat dey mo'n ap to pester you.

"Honey, you kin pull yo little cot in hyur to-night, un sleep at de foot uv Grandaddy bade. Cose, I ay orneasy nur skyured none, but twoe be so lonesum like, un hants is skittish uv chillun, un ay fond uv compny noway; un, little Ginny, you mout is well retch up to de cubbard, un feel roun in de lef-han cornder, twell you come to a cymlin gode; put yo han in un teck out some dat mixtry you fine dar, den skrinkle it roun de key-hole, un under de doo sill, un all long de cracks un crivices, wharsomuver you see um, un sho's you born, ay no hant gwy cross dat mixtry dis night."

"Grandaddy, what dat stuff made outen, reason it so hard on hants?"

"Chile, dat secret bin in our fambly mos a hundud yurs, un we ay lowed to tell nobordy."

"Well! ain't I jes much de fambly is you?"

"Cose you is, but you has to pyar yosef, fo you kin ceive de merruts uv dat secret; twoe be wuth noth'n to you less'n you does."

"What dat I has to do?"

"Two days you has to live on bread soaked in mornin jew, wid a few draps a honey, den warsh yosef twice a day, in a clar, runnin stream. Arter dat you has to swar un cross yo heart, you wo tell nary soul on top'n de yuth."

"Is I so young, mebbe I wo has to do all dat starvin un warshin, but I dunno bout dat swarin, caze dat is cussin, un Miss Mary say cussin is sin, un I ay gwy go gin what she say, fur no hants nur nobordy."

"Den nuff said—you ay nuver gwy know dat secret."

"Grandaddy, less'n you doe tole me, I sleeps to myself dis night, un wo hope to keep de hants off'n you."

"Gal, you is gittin mighty sassy lately, but I reckon you ay spornsible. Tis jes dat freedom wuckin in you. Twor dat a way fo de war; den chillun know dey place—dey war nuver hyurd, un sildum seed. Is I study bout it, pears to me, ef you sho do dem things fur de puricashum uv yo-

sef, when you gits older, un cross yo heart, un clar un vow you wo breave it to nobordy, I mout tell you now."

"I clar un vow un cross my heart, twoe nuthin meck me tell."

"Put dat lef han on yo heart un shot yo eyes, is I speak it. Dis de mixtry: fo-leaf clovers fur luck, a owl hade fur wisdom, de heart uv a suckin dove fur peace un love, un a pinch a salt to zerve de luck, de wisdom un de peace un love from corruction. Dis mo'n iny hant kin stan; it sen um bout dey own business."

"Grandaddy, ef dat keep um off, what meck you want me sleep in hyur to-night?"

"What meck you ax so many queschums? I low I would'n teck no chances, dat huccum."

"Is I wuz a tellin you, bout dat Yankee raid—dey put me in min' uv bees swarmin evywhar you did'n want un, um lef'n dey sting wharsom-uver dey light. Miss done bin orneasy evy since I bounce de Buzzard; she say trouble gwy come out'n it. De nex day, is I wuz at wuck, sho nuff I look up un dar stood two Yankees, come fur to 'res one poo ole nigger. Sich a creepy feelin is I had, jes like when you mos tread on a big snake, un ay got noth'n to kill im wid. I feel mighty wabbly bout de laigs un kind a chattery in de teeth, un all uv a sudden sich a gonesomeniss spread over de pit uv my stummuck. I tun sorter sick, but cose I nuver low dem to see it, un I would'n let Miss



“ ‘Early de nex mornin, is I spectid, dey come arter me again ’”

(See page 89)



know it fur noth'n in de worl, caze she feel bad nuff inyhow. I jes speak up chirpy de bes I could un tell her twor noth'n, un how I be back fo long, caze my color gwy sho tect' me.

"Twor no use meckin no fuss, so I start long wid um, un 'have quiet un spectable is I were brung up. By'm by, is my sperrits riz, I talk so much foolishness, dem men think I wuz a igiot monkey. I say, 'Marse Sojer, dis a mighty long, hot road you gwine. Ef'n you turn to de lef, when we git to de forks, de road is cool un shady, un two ur three miles nigher yo camp den dis. I born un raised right hyur, thank Gord, un I know all de brier patchis same's de rabbits, un evy fox hole, un evy bee tree, un whar all de wile varmints live, good is dey does deysef.'

"Den deylook at one a nur, un whisper toguther, un I hyur um say, 'He sich a fool he ay got sense nuff to lead a duck to water!'

"I say, 'Dis road suit me mighty well; I doe nuver feel rale good less'n de sun so brilin hot, it kink de hyar on top'n my hade. De hotter de sun, de louder me un de jar fly sing.' Den I riz my voice un buss out a singin:

" 'Brer Rabbit wink at de possum,
De possum grin at me;
I shy a rock at de critter,
He clum de hicknut tree.'

"Dey holler un laugh, un say, 'Go a hade, ole coon, but ef'n you playin iny yo monkey tricks on us, yo

nuver monkey no mo.' I say, 'Yas, sir, you kin pend on me bout dat, caze dis ay no playin time wid me.'

"Den dey say, 'Aint he a daisy?' I dunno zackly what dat mean; cose I knows de little white flower wid de yaller eye, un I rickerlick Mars use to call little Mary his Daisy, caze she so sweet. But dat ay me.

"Den dey tell me fur to sing some plantashun songs, un I gin um:

"'I could'n live bedout de flowers
Uv dat sweet magnolia tree;
I could'n sleep whar de mockin bird
Could'n sing he song to me;
I'd soon be noth'n but skin un bones
Ef de codfish wuz my meat;
I'd pine un die on Boston beans,
Caze possum is what we eat.'

"Dey say, 'He's a reglar jay-bird.' Fus I a skyur crow, den a coon, den a flower, den agin a bird!

"I say, 'Yas, sar, all dem things is plentiful roun hyur, but pears like, ef dey is me un I is dem, tay no use meckin me spornsible fur noth'n I done, caze none uv dem critters got rale hard horse sense.'

"We go long like dat a good ways, un dey nuver 'spicion noth'n ontwell I lan um plum in de Cornfederate lines, un stid uv dey havin me, I had dem. I seen many a black cloud

in summer time, but de looks un words uv dem two men wuz wussen any thunder un lightnin I uver see. I got outen de retch on um, quick is I could. Is I start home I mecks um a bow, un say, 'Dis fool nigger did'n have nuff sense to lead a duck to water, but sho's you born, he lead two geese to sich troubled waters, dar wo be no swimmin, nur flyin' nuthur.'

"Wid dat I put out un nuver stop twell I got home. Miss wuz mighty sprise to see me, un she want me to git out de way, twell de Yankees lef de neighborshood. I tell her I ay got nowhar to git, un I ay done noth'n to hide fur; sides, I done promise Marster to tuck cyur uv her un de chillun, while he way, so cose I bleege to stay.

"Yearly de nex mornin, is I spectid, dey come arter me agin. Dis time dar wuz three un um, but dar war no shiverin un shakin in me. I members who I is, Marse Ginul Harrison's Hade Gardner, what nuver wuz skyured uv noth'n, scusin snakes un hants. De fus thing dey ax me, did I know inything bout two uv dey men, dey sarnt out yistiddy? I say, 'I see um bout de place, un I meck sho dey come fur to bury dey commonrade, what kill hesef drinkin kaysene ile. We all got some mighty bad alligaturs down dar in de river, un dey mout a kotch um, fur what I know.' My mammy raise me always to tole de trufe, less'n I in a mighty tight place; den ef I bleege to lie, to be sho to stick to it, un

keep on tellin um, twell I git out a trouble. I know de time had come to do is she say. Dey nuver stop ontwell dey tuck me to de orfficer. He look like de hade overseer, all dress up in blue un gole.

"He say, 'Is you de man what had de audacious-niss to strike one uv my men?'

"I say, 'I mout be, un den agin I mout'n. But Mr. Ginul, I gwy speak de trufe un shame de devul, un dar he stan right over dar'—un I pint at de Buzzard. 'When Marse lef home, he tell me to teck cyur uv Mistiss un de chillun, un when dat man what call hesef a sojur, order my Mistiss roun un call her names, I could'n hope it, my fis' jes natchully flewed out un lit in he mouf. Mr. Ginul, I ay no fussin, fightin nigger, but dar ay no collured man, ef' he inyways sef-spectin, un got de right stuff in im, gwy stan un see his Mistiss sulted.'

"'Whar is yo Marster?'

"'Law, Mr. Ginul, you ought to know dat bettern me, caze de las time I hyur tell on im, he jes done gin yo men sich a beat'n dey ay stop runnin yit. I doe zackly know whar he at, but wharsom-uver he is, I sho he chasin Yankees.'

"De men standin roun sniggle un giggle, but de Ginul frown un say, 'I spose you know who yo Marster is?'

"'Oh, yas, sar, evybordy know my Marster, un dem dat dont is de wuss off. He Marse Ginul Har-

“‘When Marse lef home, he tell me to teck cyur uv Mistiss un de chillun’”



ri-son. Dey de fuss people, de Harrisons is, dat got hyur arter Marse Chris Cumlumbus skivered Meriky, un my granmammy were named Chris Meriky, arter bofe un um. So cose dey blongs to de fus fambly in de country. De Harrisons un Marse Pat Henry, wid a few mo like um, meck dis country what tis.'

" 'How wuz dat, ole man?'

" 'Well, sar, be'n is how you is a stranger in dese parts, I reckon you ay nuver hyur tell uv Marse Pat Henry. He were a mighty nice gemp-mun, but sorter full uv hesef, un de beatinis man fur talk, dat uver wucked a jaw. So when de country got in trouble, dey sarnt him, un de Harrisons—un Marse Tom Jefferson mout a bin long—to Richmun fur to fix up things. While de meetin wuz gwine on in St. John's Chuch, Marse Pat Henry he jump up un gin to argify, un when he could'n hole hesef in no longer, he pintly low is how dey mus gin im his own way, ur kill im one tother; dey could'n spyar him, so dey low im to do is he choose, un he save de country. Evy sense on de fofe uv July, we's had de celumbrashun uv de Decorashun uv Himdumpe-nunce, wid a plenty a fire wucks throwed in. Pears like de fire wucks done teck de place uv de big men, what use to wuz. From dat day Ole Virginny tuck de lead, un she had it evy sense. She always have de bes men for de casion, whatsomuver dat mout be, un whensomuver she am backards in comin

forrards, you may be sho de business is powerful small. She got de name uv raisin de biggis men, de biggis sweet taters, un de biggis possums on top'n de yuth! But I tecks off my hat is I come to de bes thing uv all, de ole Virginny Mistiss. Fur all dat is good un beauful, she de Mistiss uv de worl. She stan jes is high over tother folks, is de eagle do over de sparrow.'

" 'Ole man, is you ever bin in a lunatic sylum? "

" 'No, sar; de Souf ay nuver need no sich a thing fur we all, but sho's you born, ef'n you tun de nigger loose on de country, de quicker you build dem sylums de better. '

" Den he tell me to go home, un say he gwy sen Miss a guard, so she wo be sturbed no mo, caze he un Marster wuz frien's at West Pint.

" I say, 'Please, Marse Ginul, mout I shook hans wid you fur dat? caze ef you Marster's frien I knows you is a gempmum. I ax you a thous'n pard'ns ef'n I bin inyways disrespecable. Sometimes a ole nigger's brains gits addled, un den he tongue mo'n ap to wag at bofe eens. '

" When we git home, dey wuz all mighty proud to see us, specialty de chillun—dey hang roun un would'n leave me. Little Mary put her arms roun my naked un say, 'Daddy Ben, I so fraid de Yankees done eat you up. '

" We wuz all kinder skittish uv dat guard, twell we see how kind un good he wuz. Evy time he



"Daddy Ben"



draw he rashums, he bring back supp'n nice fur Miss un de chillun. She thank im mighty perlite, but nuver totched noth'n. Cose de chillun did'n know no better, un dey wuz pleased wid evything he fotch.

"He stay mo'n a munt, un when he had to go, you mout a thought he de chillun bes frien, frum de way dey hug un kiss im. De tears wuz in he eyes too, un he tell Miss when de war wuz over he sho comin down hyur to live, caze twuz de bes place, un de bes folks he uver see. He tole de Gorspel trufe dat time, ef'n he nuver done it befo.

"Arter dat, a sick sojer wuz lef on de road to die, un Miss had im fotched up to de house, un nus im same's he one uv de fambly, stider de wuss inimy we all had. Polly Ann were de bes nus on de place, so she had to teck cyur on im. She were mighty good un faithful bout waitin on im, un tendin to im, so when he wuz well nuff to go home, he thank her fur all her kindness, un tell her, whensomever she want to come Norf, all she got to do, jes let im know, un he well sen de money to pay her spensis.

"Arter de war wuz over un de stervancis wor so bilin hot, here come a letter from him, wid de money, axin her to come on, caze he want his family to see her. Polly Ann nuver cyur so much bout goin, caze she skittish a bein so fur frum home, but Miss vise her to go, so cordin

to dat she went. In about a week's time arter she lef, we look up de road one evenen, un dar wuz Polly Ann comin home.

"Is she step in de doo she drap on her knees, un say, 'Prez Gord, I done git back to my own people once mo'!"

"I say, 'Hi! wuz dar iny misgreeunce twix you un yo Yankee friens?"

"'Nor, dey could'n a been no better to me; dey gin me a room up stairs in de same house wid dem, un gracious mussy on me, dey achsully meck me sot down at de same table un eat wid um, three times a day. Dat is I try to eat, but evy time I look up I see so many eyes scrutionizin a me, you mout a thought I wuz a wile varmint, jes out'n de woods. Dey always had a heap of silver un flowers on de table, un a plenty to eat, sich is twuz. But sich foamy, furrin things, un thin watery soups lef me jes is hungry when I git up, is when I sot down.

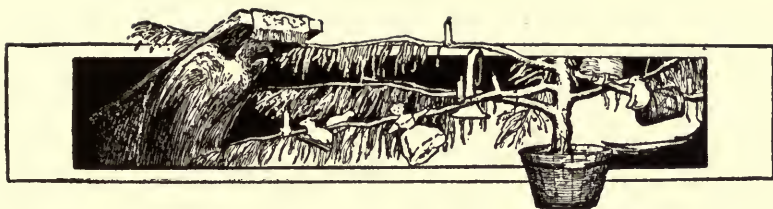
"'I tell um, ef'n dey could tase we-all's rich, thick Jumbo soup, dey would'n tetch sich stuff is dat no mo. I use to git so homesick, un I think to myself, ef de Lord spyar me to sot down one more time at our kitchen table, wid a plenty a corn bread, un a plate a good greasy cabbage, wid de folks laughing, un jokin un cuttin uv de pigeon wing, dat dey nuver git me way agin in de creashum. Sott'n by white folks did'n suit my stummuck; pear like it tuck my hapentite

clean away, caze I ay use to mixin up wid um like dat nohow. Dey skin is white un ourn is black, un dar's jes is much diffunce twix us on de inside, is dar be on de outside. Ef looks could a pison inybordy, I'd a drap dade in my tracks, caze when dat white butler wait on me, he look mad nuff to kill me. Doe tole me noth'n bout dat New York; tis de tarnashunis, beatinis, busyis place I uver come crost. De fus mornin arter I got dar, I look out de doo, un seed so many folks racin down de street, I run out un holler, "Whar de fire at? Which a way is de fire?" Nobordy nuver tuck no notis, so I kotch a gempmun by de coat tail un ax im, "Please, Marster, what is de marter, meck all dese folks in sich a big hurry?" He stop un look hard at me un say, "Pear like a lunatic done scape." By dat time Mr. Smith—he de gempmun I visitin—meck me come in de house. Arter I git better quainted, I see twar noth'n—jes evybordy in a whirl-win to git money. At home I bin use to see darkies, frum de time dey larn to walk, tuck pattern frum de snail, un dey nuver low deysef to beat im fur. Anuther time, I try to teck a street cyar on Broadway; I stan frum 9 twell plum 12 o'clock, un stop evy cyar dat pass, but is I look in, de seats wuz all pack, un a plenty a hangin on to de strings. I say to mysef, "Dar mus be a big circus somewhar bout." De crowd keep a passin, un I reckon I bin

standin dar yit, ef it had'n bin fur a perlice. I done stop so many cyars, pears like dey done git stalldid, un fur is you could se, dar dey wuz. Dat perlice grab me by de arm un say, "What is you doin, you black borilla?" I tell im he done mischance my name, dat tis Polly Ann. Den I splain to im huccum I stop so many cyars, caze I did'n war jam up gin de white folks. He push me in, un say, "You got to git on dis one, ef'n it teck you to hell." When I out a retch uv he stick, I holler back, "I boun you git dar fus, caze de road you's on is faster den dis, un pear like you got a free pass dat way." Is I try to sot down de cyar fling me in a gempmun's lap, un when I riz I struck de butt een uv my umbriller mos in a lady eye. I wished I had a kep on standin.

"Dey wuz mighty sprised at Mister Smith's, when I tell um I had to git home; dey speck me to stay a munt. He ax me aint evybordy bin good to me, un aint I had evything I want. I says, "Yas, sur, but I bleegeed to git home." He say, "I guess I bin better to you den yo Marster—he nuver low you to set at de table wid him, did he?" "Who? my Marster? My Marster a gempmun—he doe soshate wid niggers." "





CHAPTER IX

“GRANDDADDY, what you chucklin bout over dar in de chimbly cornder?”

“Honey, wharsoever I at, night ur day, I bleege to laugh when I thinks bout dat fool nigger Mose, un what he tell me, is he pass by hyur on he way home.”

“Grandaddy, sholy you ay gwy lef me out dat joymint, is you?”

“Well, he say, ‘T’s a Norf Caliny nigger, un when I were a liddle pigadinny, Mammy use to say, when she got mad, “Yo hade hard is a pine knot, un you black is tar, so dis de place fur you, caze Norf Caliny nigger is de meanis, mulishis nigger in de worl.” (She cum frum Ole Virginny.)

“‘I says to myself, tay no use bein free un educated, caze I kin read, ef de letters is big un dar aint many on em. I says tay no use in dat ef you doe git no speunce uv de worl. I sets my min fur to go to Washington, caze dey say tis nigger Heben, un evybordy know is how Mr. Booker Washinton name dat place arter his-sef. By de time I done got to Richmund my

money gin out, caze ef you keeps comp'ny wid craps, yo money wo keep comp'ny wid you. I nuver knowed nobordy dar, un bein is how twant blackberry time nor yit watermillion, I war able to pick up nuthin dout wuck.

“Dey tell me Marse Jedge Brown want a butler. I ax um what he spec im to butt agin. Dey say, “You sho is a fool nigger. Whar is you cum frum inyhaw?” So I says, “I gwine see bout dat place, caze I hear he pay big money un quires mighty little wuck, un dat de job for me.” I went dar, un a solum specable omun open de doo. I says, “Hows yo health dis mornin, Miss? I’s a gempmun frum Norf Caliny, cum to see ef a white man, what live hyur, want help.” Dat omun sho wuz tempshus. Pears like her eyes sarch me fru un fru. Den she spoke up un say, “You aint de kind er fool we’s looking fur; sich trash is you, we sweeps out’n de back doo.” Wid dat she bout to slam de doo in my face, but I ketch it un say, “I ax yo pard’n: I wuz jes a tryin to ack perlite, like dey does in Washintun.” She lem me cum in un say, “Ole Miss is out, but I spec the Jedge will see you.”

“De fus thing he ax me, who I bin live wid? I tell im Marse Ginul Catesby; he low he know im mighty well. Den I han im my rickerdashums. He say, “What you bin doin dar?” Dat wuz same’s a mule done kick me, caze I wor noth’n cep stable han at home, un cose I wor gwy splain

dat. I mecks a low bow un tell im, "I mos inginully sarves in vaous attichudes, sar, but I always tries to please de white folks." He smile un tell me cum early de nex day. I got dar befo de white folks was out'n de bade, caze twuz Chrismus un I want to be roun when de presunts wuz a circumvatin.

"Arter breckfus, evybordy went to church. Twuz so close to de house, I jes step roun un peep in. I ay nuver see sich doins in church befo. Cedars un pines, un hollies sett'n bout evywhar un swingin in de ar, twell it look mos like de woods. But grashus mussy on my soul! right whar de preacher stan, wuz a g-r-e-a-t big brass tuckey buzzard, wid he wings stretch out, un a book on he back. I know de white folks wo low nobordy to kill dem varmint, but I ay hear dey sot so much sto by um, dat dey put he monimint in de chuch. It sho were scanlous de way dey treat dat preacher; evy time he try to pray, all on um anser him back; seem like dey sput'n wid im bout sup'n. In de Fus Baptist Chuch whar I blong, I seen a nigger hade mos knock off, fur less'n dat.

"De sextum tell me I can set in de galry. I say, "Thanky, sar, but I wo roose in no place whar dey keeps tuckey buzzards." Dat wuz a Pistocal Chuch, un I ay nuver had no use fur em sense.

"I run back, un me un Polly Ann git to wuck to shine up de silver un de glass, un to have things

ready fur dinner, caze dar wuz a heap er comp'ny in de house. When evything wuz fix, Marse Judge say, "Moses, jes befo dinner, bring in some cocktails." I run down de barn yard un tore roun wuss'n somebordy stractid. I wuz out a bref when I cum back, but I snatch up a silver waiter un put de cocktails on it un tuck it in to de gempmen.

"I says, "I hope dey suit you, sar; dey is de finis on de place, caze I cut um off de chickens mysef." Miss' face tun mighty red, un den dey all buss out in a laf. I ay nuver know huccum. Soon arter dat dey all march in to dinner. Polly Ann dun sho me how to han chamepin. Soon's uver it totch de glass it bile over. I mos blow dat glass off'n de table un I says, "Marse Judge, dis de trufe: I jes tuck dat thing off'n de ice un now it bunnin up." I roll my eyes at Polly Ann, caze I know she trick dat stuff jes to comflusticate me. Arter dat I git on all right, wid Polly Ann to hope me, scus'n one raw oyshter drap on de back of a gempman's nake. He jump so he lead a mo knock de plate out'n my han, but I kotch de oyshter fo he know what totch im. When dat dinner were mos over, de pusrashum wuz runnin down my face, same's I had a spring in my hade.

"'Ole Miss done 'struc' me, how she want some holly put roun de plum pudd'n un arter de brandy wuz po on it, to sot it on fire is I take it in.

“‘I pile de holly roun it ontwell de dish wo hole no mo; den I fotch de biggist waiter on de place un put de dish on dat, wid some mo holly; I plies de match un open de doo, but de blaze done riz so high I could’n see nobordy, but I hear um jump up un run todes me, but befo dey git to me, my hyar done kotch un in a light blaze. I drap de pudd’n, un tumble down de steps, un nuver stop ontwell I lan in de kitchen. I jes could see de cook noddin in de chur, un I butts plum into her, un grab her apun to put out my hade. Dat omun gin sich a howl, she far shuck de marrer in my bones. She drap on her knees un say, “Please, Marse Devul, have mussy on me! No, sar, I nuver say Devul—I says, Marse Satum, please spyar me. I ay sot fire to dat pudd’n—I jes drink de brandy un put kaysene ile in de place on it, caze I know one bun same’s tother. Spyar me un teck Mose; he ar mo fitter to go un I ar.” Wid dat she flop over on de floo. By dis time, I done souge my hade in a pail a water, un I knows I ay hut much; jes all my hyar dun swinge off.

“‘I shakes all over, when I thinks bout dat omun teck me fur de devul, come fur to cyar her off. I roll off de chur un I holler un laf, un I laf un holler, ontwell Marse Jedge stan over me un say, “You darned fool, what in de thunder you kickin up all dis fuss fur?” I try to tell im, is how de omun tuck me fur de devul, but I could’n stop

laffin, caze I had de high strikes. He say, "I skin you alive ef you doe git up from dar."

"Den de laf lef me, un I says, "I zarve fur you to teck all de skin off'n me, what de fire is lef, caze I dun ceive you. Un Mammy always say:

" "Ef you ceive, you bleege to grieve;
Ef you lie, you sho to die."

Den she tell us chillun bout dem poor young ladies in de Scriptur, Miss Annie Nigh Us un Miss Sophy Fire; how dey drap dade, caze dey did'n zactly tole de trufe. Evy nigger feel fur dem, caze dey know how tis deysef." At dat de Jedge smile un put he han in he pockit un gim me some money, un tell me to git out. I look at de money, un I looks at him, un I say, "Thanky, Marster; I knowed you wuz a fuss-class gempmun, un use to niggers, soon's uver I hear you cuss."'''







CHAPTER X

“GRANDDADDY, I bin stayin wake uv nights, thinkin bout dem Christmas times befo de war, un it bin on my min’ so much, I mos got Christmus in my bones.”

“Honey, I feels mighty disconshumit un disin-curg bout tellin uv you, caze arter all I kin say, tis so diffunt frum de rale thing, it doe seem like noth’n. Dese Christmuis we has now ay noth’n but chile’s play—jes imifications uv what use to wuz.”

“Well, I think dey’s fine.”

“Dat caze you dunno no better. We all had mo Christmus in one ole-time Christmus den you will uver have ef’n you live to be a hundud.”

“Grandaddy, you knows a heap but you doe know evything, caze I mout marry a rich nigger, dat own he own cabin, un mule un cyart, un cows un pigs un chickens, un den you may pend pun it, I’d gin a party evy Christmus, un war a yaller dress wid red flowers on it.”

"Well, sposin is how you done it. One swallow doe meck a summer, no mo'n it meck a Christmus; it teck a heaper swallows, uv mighty good eatins, to meck a Christmus. A nigger party is a mighty one-horse afyar dese days: stale cake wid weak lemonade, un mebbe one banjur ur a fiddle is bout all."

"Grandaddy, is you sick?"

"Nor; what meck you ax me dat?"

"Caze I hyur um say tis a ill bird what foul he own nes, un pears like you always meckin small uv we all."

"I ay no sich thing; I jes tell de naked trufe like tis. Fo de war, de cullured folks wuz de bes people in de worl, scus'n de white folks, un, praise Gord, I know some now wid souls jes is white is dey skin is black. I mosly speechifyin bout dem dat give deysef so many ars, doe I reck'n dat bout all dey kin gin deysef.

"Nowadays, cullured folks think dey ay livin less'n dey swarm in town un settle in somebordy's back alley, whar dey kin retch out dey arms un tetch a grog-shop wid one han un a ash-bank wid t'other. Dat what dey call 'joyin freedom. Dey done forsook de country, de blessed country, whar we use to wuck in de fresh ar un sunshine, wid de birds singin so sweet 'mongst de flowers un trees, dat we forgit twuz wuck un jes' thank de good Lord dat he made us un put us right whar we wuz. De country speak fur itself, un speak so pruddy

dat evybordy know tis de wuck uv His hans. De town speak loud nuff too, but tis altoguthur a duffunt chune. Wharsomever you look, you doe see noth'n scus'n rocks un bricks, what man done pile up fur he own gloricashum, less'n tis a few dusty trees, wid a plenty a English sparrers throwed in. In town, tis mos' ornpossible fur de white folks to 'scape de crutches uv Satum—less mo' de nigger; he doe stan no chance a tall, caze mos evy bref is smoke un sin vid de ole Scratch always lively un busy fannin uv de fumes roun evy cornder.

"Tay nobordy kin stay mean long un live in de country, mo' particular on de Jeems River, caze de fine ar keep de liver right, un dat stroys all de natchul symtums uv de min'; un ef'n iny badniss lef, when de malarious teck hol' on you, sho's you born, dem chills gwy shuck it out, caze on de plantashum we done teck notis dem dat has de shakinis chills always has de meekis un de fewis ornjectable ways. Den agin, pears like dat river preachin un singin to us all de time tellin us our restin place ay hyur, but we mus go on un on over rocks un rough places, byarin many a burd'n orntwell at las we cum to dem still waters dat float us to de peaceful sho'. Dat river-song put me in min' uv de low sweet chune Mammy use to sing to us chillun, when she git us to sleep uv nights.

"Ole is I is, dat chune ay nuver lef me. Mo particular, when I sick un in trouble, den I hyur

it so plain un feel so easy un comforble, I think sholy Mammy mus be close by, un mebbe she wuz, I dunno, caze de Lord so good, He mout low her to cum back a little while in sich times. Seem like I kin see her now is she sot in de chimbley cornder knittin un smok'n her pipe, wid a apun white is snow, un one dem ole-timey red un yaller bandany hankchuffs pile up on her hade. Yurs fo she die, she were so ole she nuver done noth'n cep'n what she choose, but she love to knit socks fur de men, un gloves fur de wimmen. She wuz 'Mammy Chloe' to evybordy on de plantashum, un twor only in name. Long is she could git about she hope nuss de sick, big un little. Christmus mornins her room was mos like a sto', caze twar nobordy too po' to member her. Soon's ever she git two ur three pyars a socks done, she put um in a baskit, un always teck um to de house hersef. Den Miss un de young ladies meck sich a fuss over her wuck un praise her so, twas same's candy to a chile. She nuver bring dat baskit back emty nuther, caze dey always fill it wid what dey know she want. Many a time I's hyurd her thankin Gord fur sich a Mistiss. So you see, Honey, tis in my blood to love white folks. Me un Ginny always kep her splied wid good smokin ter-baccar un sto' shoes fur her po' ole tired feet. De las wuck she uver done, wuz to knit dem long warm socks fur me. I ay nuver had de heart to war um, but sometimes when I feels lonesome uv



"Mammy Chloe"



nights, I tecks um to bade wid me, long wid Ginny's shawl, un den de sleep cum quick un sweet, un once mo I's wid Mammy un Ginny."

"Grandaddy, is dat huccum you tecks dat bottle a whisky to bade wid you evy night too, caze you think so much on it?"

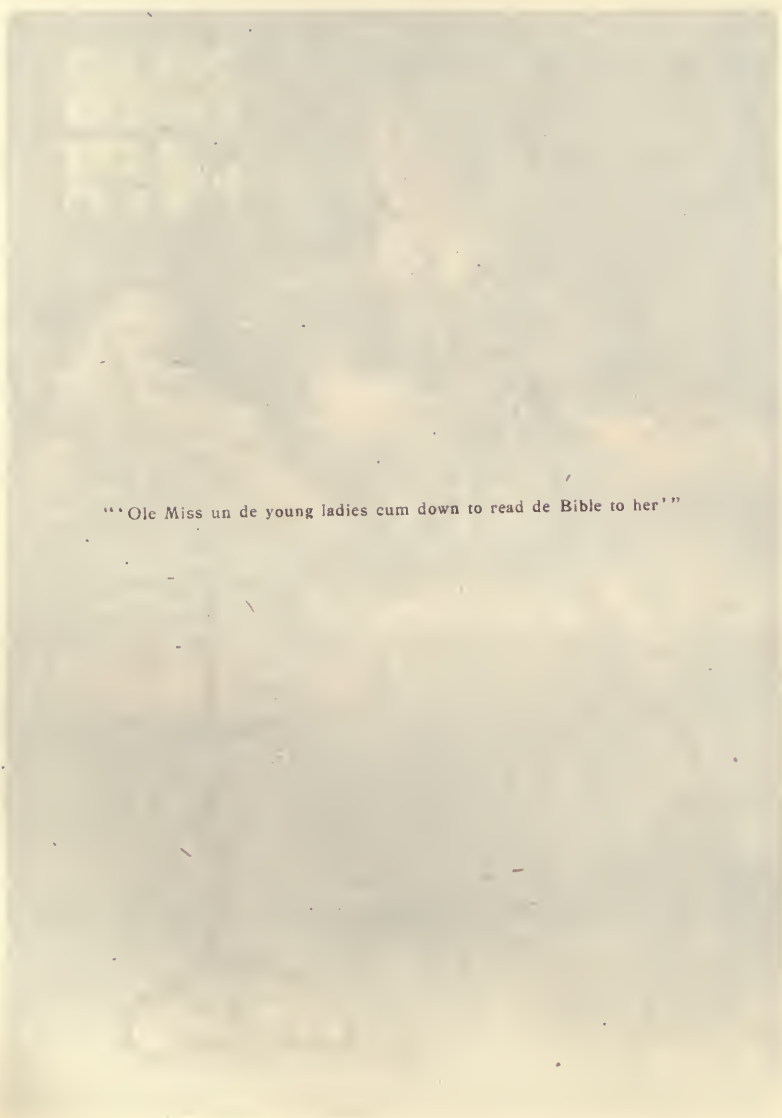
"Nor, I has dat in case a sickness."

"Grandaddy, I smells it so strong, you mus be sick cornstunt uv nights."

"Nor, I ay nuther, but dat bottle so hard un cole, un pester me so sometimes, I bleege to drink de whisky, to git shet uv it.

"Mos a yur fo Mammy die, she were disable to lef her house, but evy day de Lord sen, Ole Miss un de young ladies cum down to read de Bible to her, un to see she did'n lack fur nuth'n. Honey, min' what I tell you: always stick to yo ligion fuss, ef'n tis de right kin', un yo own white folks nex, ef'n dey got money, un doe nuver low nuth'n to come twix you un dem two, caze one tecks cyar on you in de nex worl, un de tother do de same by you in de worl what's hyur. It go gin me to tole it, but tay no use fur to keep it back, but dar's mighty little ligion in de Pistocal Church, cep'n bout in spots. De Mephdis ay much better, but dem Pristeriums is de wuss uv al, caze who uver hyur of a Pristerium nigger? Tay none. Un whar de fold is so narrer dat it cyar teck in a few black sheep long wid de white, you may be sho' de pickins mus be mighty small un too

scace to go roun. Den agin, nex to eat'n, dar ay noth'n de darkey love like buss'n out in a big horse laugh. Now, nobordy ay nuver hyur de true blue Pristerium laugh. Tis gin natur, caze dey brags dat dey born in a state uv sin un misry, un pear like dey bleege to stay dar. Frum de cradle to de grave, dey spends dey time buryin pledgur, un dey is always de natchul pall-byarers uv de same. Eben dat outlandish Roman Catlick Chuch do teck in a few spectid culled folks—but dey gits turrubble dumfoundid un comflusticativ, wid de cumfushun uv de rattlin brass un de tinklin thimbles. But it do um some good too, caze dey bleege to min' dat priest un dey say he wo dissolve um, or sump'n nother like dat, less'n dey spend a heaper time un all dey money right dar, stidder scatterin' it roun mongst dem secret scieties what dey all crazy bout. I rickleck when Big Billy cum fru, he travel a monstous hard, rocky road, caze he were a good man, all scus'n to one thing gin im. Pear like, when he handle tother folk's prapty, some on it bleege to stick to he fingers—twar noth'n much, jes chick'ns un sich little things is dat, but cose, arter he git ligion, he drap all dat. He were mighty pestered in he min', which chuch to jine, caze de Baptis whar he blong sorter skeer im off, wid de sougin he bleege to teck in dem deep waters. Dey all try to git im, caze he had a loud voice un a powerful arm, un dem things



"Ole Miss un de young ladies cum down to read de Bible to her'"



always cum in mighty handy in de cullured meetins. He Mephdis friens try to suade im to cum wid dem, un tell im tay much spectid uv im in dat chuch, cep'n to shout. But one dem Catlicks what's always mighty up un stirrin bout, gittin members, splain to him ef'n he jine dem, doe meck no diffunce what he do, dey sho' giv im dissolution. Dat hit de nail plum on de hade, caze Billy were always on de make, un he low, bein is how twuz de onlyis chuch dat offer to gin him inything, he gwine long a dem un teck what he could git. Dat were some time fo' Easter, un I hyur um say, Billy were awful dis-pinted dat he nuver ceive nuth'n. He say he meck sho' is de name wuz so big, de present gwy corrisporn, un mo'n dat, he say dey had'n lowed im to eat a squar meal sense he tun Catlick. Cose tay no hard-shell Baptis kin see noth'n good in tother folks, caze dey so extry deysef, de bad stan out mighty big in evybordy else. But dey tuns de blind side un de deaf yur to a heap dat goes on mongst deysef, caze we bleege to have charty to one anuther. Tis hard to git in dat chuch, un jes is hard to git out—dat meck it de hard-shell Baptis. But tis de ark a safety, caze all her foundashums un trus is in de water, un ginst dat tay no flames dat kin purvail."

"Grandaddy, ay we all white folks Pistocal?"

"Yas, Honey, all de quality white folks is Pistocal, but our folks jes natchully born so good,

de chuch cyar hut um. I bleege to say dis much: de Pistocal ligion doe do nobody no harm, no mo'n it doe do um no good. Pear like it lef um to do pruddy much is dey choose."

"Well, Grandaddy, I doe cyar what you say, nur what you is. Our white folks is Pistocal, un Miss Mary is Pistocal, un livin un dade, I's Pistocal too."

"You ay nuver gwy be much, caze you born on a ornlucky day uv a ornlucky munt, un on de wrong side uv de moon; wuss'n all, you born a free nigger, so ef'n you doe misgrace yosef, tis much is I kin spec."

"You doe spec much a me ornjorin de day, but soon's ever night cum, you mo'n apt to spec me to hope keep off dem hants. So arter dis, you kin keep all yo specs to yosef."

"Well, sence you so uppish un sassy, you kin do dout de Chrismus time you war hyur bout."

"Yas, un you kin do dout my cookin un live on dat ole Chrismus time too."

"I reckon Miss Mary will see to dat, un I gwy tole her bout yo 'havior dis day."

"Grandaddy, me un you ay gwy have no fuss, caze we is good Baptis, un dey ay no tale-toters, nur eaves-drappers nuther."

"Pears like I always flewin off frum whar I start, wus'n a blue bird, lookin fur a place to buil' in springtime. Whar wuz I at? Oh! yas, de ole sayin, 'Chrismus cum but wunst a yur,

un when it cum it bring good chur,' un it did for a fac wid me, caze cornstunt Marster un Mistiss sarnt me a nice easy chur for Chrismus. Dey low I stan so much ornjorin de day—I nuver was no sot'n nigger, nohow—dey war' me to have sup'n comfuble to sot in when I got home uv nights. Dat huccum you see all dese nice churs roun hyur now. Me un Ginny nuver buy none on um, you may be sho."

"I thought dey had always long to us, caze we wuz de quality cultured."

"Poo white trash un darkies always sets orn-easy in fine churs. Dey mo'n apt to set too much side ways, back ways ur front ways. I blege to laugh when I think bout dat Dilsey Dina come in hyur wid her hade up in de ar, un her apun full a aigs. She look roun un pick out de bes' chur like she use to it, un sot plum down on de aidge; cose it kick up behime, un butt her on de back uv de hade. She flop down on de flo', wid all de aigs flyin un squshin evy which a way. Sich a mess is she wuz! She wor fitten to see. I laugh so hard I could'n hope her up, un evy time she mek a struggle to git up, de mo aigs she broke. De mortication un de bruk aigs tuck off de high hade cornsidable.

"Well, de blue bird done lit, so de black bird gwine, on bout de ole Chrismus. Pears like I kin hyur de sleigh bells a ringin, de chillun shoutin un laughin, de carriges un wagins

a comin, un de bustle un fuss in de kitchen, un de whole plantashum in a broad grin un busy un happy is de birds in May time. Little gal, I doe blieve I able to git no funder; it mos breck my ole heart, I so home-sick fur dem days."

"Grandaddy, we still got Miss Mary, un you know she give us a fine Chrismus evy yur."

"So she do, so she do, but tis mos like diggin up de grave uv somebordy dat's nigh to you. Bout a week fo de time, Miss un all de young ladies un gempmum at de house use to go out in de woods un git wagin loads uv cedar, holly, pine un runnin cedar to dress de chuch un de house. De chuch always come fuss wid Miss. Folks use to say she un Marster wuz de pillars uv de chuch. Dey wuz de pillars, de roof un mos de chuch itself. Miss wuz bettern iny preacher, caze her sermons wor so much words is dey wuz deeds. She jes went long quiet-like, doin fur tothers. She kep a cyart un horse busy, sendin things to de pasturage fur de paster un he fambly. De servuns grumble mightly behime her back bout so much leavin de place. Dey nuver like to see nothin go off, less'n dey tote 'toff deyself. It always went by de name uv de pasturage cyart un pony, un dar wuz prime pickins in it, I kin tell you. One day, is we wuz fixin things un puttin up de festooms in de chuch, little Mary say, 'Daddy Ben'—dat what she call me—'don't it look beauful?' I

say, 'Yas, honey, but ef'n you ma want it to look mo like de woods, in no time I kin kotch her a possum un a coon, to mix wid dem greens un it be mo natchul-like.' She run un tole her ma, un her brother Charles wuz standin close by—he say ef Daddy Ben cum, dat be coon nuff. Little Mary spoke up un say, 'Yas, den you'll be de ugly possum.' Miss tole im ef'n he did'n have no mo marners den dat, he could go home un stay by hesef, orntwell he larnt some, un she sarnt im straight dar. White chillun wuz mo perlite to cullured folks in dem times den cullured chillun is to white folks now. Some time befo Chrismus, Miss always use to sen extry pervishums to de quarters, sich is flour, molassis un things, so is de servans mout have plenty a time to meck dey preckrashums. Chrismus Eve de fun begin, wid all de comp'ny, Marster, Mistiss un de chillun semble on de porch, to sen off fire wucks. De servans wuz always dar too to hope, un to joy de sight; un twuz a sight, to be sho', wid all dat fire comin 'down same's rain. De cullured folks think twuz fine twell de fiery sarpunt shoot un wriggle in de ar; den some on um say twuz time fur dem to git away, caze it brung things home mos too close fur dey use. By times de nex morn'n, dey all swarm up to de house to ketch Marster un Mistiss un de chillun Chrismus gif, un evybordy on de place got a nice presunt. Ef'n de day wuz fine, sometimes we spread

tables under de big oaks un had our dinner dar; ef twarnt, two or three famblies put dey things togeth'er, un had it in de cabin, jes is we choose. Ornjorin de holdays, evy night, rain ur shine, we had dancin, candy stews ur some frolic a nuth'er, un we always win' up wid a big party. Un dat meck me say what I do say bout de parties nowadays.

"We use to have a rousin time un a gumpshus supper; roas pig wid a red apple in he mouf, ham, turkey, chickens, cakes, pies, pudd'n, custard, candy, nuts, apples, un plenty a simmon beer un corffee to wash all dem things down. We always had some several banjos un fiddles goin all de time, un is many mo to teck de place uv dem dat wuz woed out. We kep up dat frolic twell plum daybreck. Dat what I calls a reglar ole-fashion Virginny breck-down. Up at de house twuz pruddy much de same, only a little samer. Dar wuz ridin un drivin parties, dinner un evenin parties, card parties, un always a big dance Chrismus night. De house wuz full frum de garret to de celler, un pears like dey wuz still a comin un nuver none agoin. Whomsoever have de misfortnit nuver to taste ole Virginny aig-norg, dunno what tis to have rale Chrismus in he bones. It set de Chrismus bells a ringin in he heart, un ef he doe tetch it mighty light, he mo'n apt to have dem same bells a jinglin in he hade de nex mo'nin.



" . . . un always a big dance Chrismus night"



Tis de mixtry uv de grejuncies what meck de strank un de pledgur. Ef two gempmun so much is toch glassis fill wid dat foamy-sperit'd stuff, un fambly fumes been bunnin twix um ornjorin uv ginnyrashums, seem like dat norg squench de fire uv hatr'd un ornchartibleniss, un gin um peace un good will. Twuz custery in our fambly to stir up a great big bowl uv aig-norg reglar evy Chrismus Eve. Eben dat ay de same now—wher or no de hens is done stop layin rich aigs or de sperits is corructed, I dunno, but it done loss it tase. Twuz always serve in a mengous silver bowl, what cum frum clean cross de water un wuz one uv Marster's ar-looms wid de fambly coat un arms on it. I ay nuver see noth'n like dat on it, cep'n when it full a aig-norg, un de gempmun coats un arms cornstunt roun it, fillin de glassis un hopen deysef. Miss always gin de house servans some uv dat good stuff, but she had to be cyurful not to leave um wid it too long, caze whar dar is a heap a sperits, you may be sho' Satum is close by. One evenin, Miss call de cook up to de pantry to give her some. She say, 'Miss, mout I ax de privdidge to toas you in dis aig-norg?' When Miss tell her yas, dis what she speechify:

“ ‘Peace at home, pledgur abroad,
Love your husmon, un serve the Lord.’

“I ruther live one yur in dem times den five

in dese. Even de beas' un de birds had dey Chrismus too; de chillun wuz rais to be kin' to dum critturs. So, reglar, dey had a Chrismus tree for dey pets, horses, cows, dorgs, cats, un birds. Dey use to have a tolabable good cedar tree fotched up to de house un put in de groun, un den dey tie on it mos evything you kin think uv—corn, apples, cabbage leaves, beef, crackers, nuts, un I dunno what all. Arter twuz all fix, little Mary come runnin to her ma, un ax her please to have a kittle uv stewed vegables fur Cowslip, Daisy, un Buttercup. Dey wuz her pet cows. She say de corn wuz so high on de tree dey could n' retch it, un she would'n slight dem un hut dey feelins fur nuth'n. Chrismus mornin de chillun all jine hans, un dance round de tree singin a beautiful song. Marster make up a purpose fur dem. Den dey lead dey favorite pets up to de tree to hep deysef. Twuz sich a pruddy sight Marster he had it painted, un de pictur hangin in de libery now. Pears like de critters know twuz put dar fur dem, mo specialty de red birds, de blue birds, un de mockin birds. De chillun had mo fun over dat den dey did wid all dey hansom presents put toguther. Even de grown folks love to stan un watch dat tree. You know de one not fur frum de een uv de poach? Twuz de fuss de chillun put out, un nobordy had no noshun uv it livin, caze I dig it up mighty cyur-

liss mysef, un dar wuz little ur no roots; now tis de hansomis, biggis cedar on de place. Marse always say no money could buy it.

“De servuns tell mighty strange mysterisome tales bout dat tree; dey know twuz gin natur fur it to live. De fus summer arter twuz sot out de droust wuz so bad evything mos bun up; yit un still, under dat tree wuz always cool un wet, but watch it is you choose, you nuver ketch nobordy waterin it. Dey all cross dey hearts un hope dey may die, ef dey uver po a drap on it. Tis de greenis one on de place, un always full a berries, when tothers ay got none. Dey say twuz sot out by little innercent chillun, wid dey hearts full er love fur de Lord’s dum, helpless critters, un so de angels jes watch over it, un meck it flourish like dat. Un it do look dat a way, caze wunst dar wuz de awfulis storm, dat blow down a treemenjous oak not fur frum it—de lims wuz scatter all roun, evy which a way, but nary one come nigh dat cedar. Den agin in another storm, a horse standin under it wuz struck un kilt dade by a streak a lightnin, un yit un still dat tree wor totched.”

“Cose I knows de Christmus tree, caze evy Sunday when tis mil’ un pleasant, we all sets under it when Miss Mary larn us de Sunday school less’ns. I hyur Unc Cornwallus say, one dark night is he were a comin long frum de prar meetin, heseed sup’n shinin white flewed in de top uv dat tree, un

res dar a little while, un den melt away in de hebens. He low he know twuz a angel."

"Well to be sho, twuz a angel, less'n twuz a big white owl, one tother. Brer Cornwallus always wuz a powerful sight-seer, un mos ingenully what he see, is up in de clouds, whar nobordy kin glimpse it, cep hesef."

"Grandaddy, he mout be a powerful sight-seer, but when it come to noratin big tales, de jenny-wine eye-openers, you kin gin im fat un de go un beat im all holler. You got sich a ratlin tongue, you mus a tuck arter dat Marse Pat Henry I hyur you speak bout. But uv all de nice sprisin things you done tole me dese winter nights—un I ey tunnin none on um down, caze dey almos good is dem dime norvil books you has to pay ten cents fur—pears like I ruther fur to hyur bout our Miss Mary, when she were little, den evy thing else."

"Den you ought a ax me fo you wuz born, caze de yurs is too short un leas' ways my bref, to gin to tole you all de smart things dat chile said un done. Of'n times Ginny say, she wish is how she had writ down some de things she say. Dar war none like her, un ay nuver bin none sense, caze de mould wuz bruck dat she wuz made in. She wuz one by hersef, what dey call in dem julery stos a solumtaire, yit un still, she war no ways solum. She were de beatinis chile fur sense I uver see. De servans

“ . . . he seed sup’n shinin white flewed in de top uv dat tree ”



used to say she had a ole hade on young shoulders, un she pintly did.

"She put me in mind uv dem little sweet white flowers, dat come up in de cornder uv de gyarden evy yur, de little snowdraps. You ay tuck much notis uv um twell one day, you happen to pass by, un you smell sup'n so sweet you stop to see what tis. Den you doe war go no funder. Tay much, jes a hanful uv white un green, but tis nuff to dem dat love sich things. Dat chile wuz jes de same—you ay think much bout her twell one day she come to you and look up at you so sweet and innercent-like and say sup'n so orncommon smart un funny, you bleege to put down yo wuck un teck some notis uv de little thing. Arter dat you cyar pass her.

"Ginny say she git closter to you den iny chile she uver see. Twuz de same way wid evybordy on de plantashun. Dem priddy little baby ways teck her straight to yo heart; un meck evybordy love her frum de oldis to de youngis. In de yearly spring time de cullured chillun always went to de woods to fine de fus wile flowers fur her. De fus fruits, de fus un de bes uv evything wuz brung to her. Even de hardis ole sinners on de place would stop to pick up a little white rock ur a bright little bird feather un save it fur de baby. All dat wuz nuff to ruinate de bes chile pon yuth. But you mo'n ap to guther a rose frum a rose bush, un a weed

flower frum a weed. So comin frum de stock she did, she bleege to be zactly what she wuz. Mo'n dat you cyar say, caze dat cap de climber's ax. She love flowers same's her ma un de budderflies, un when she wuz tun loose in de gyard'n, un you see her runnin frum flower to flower, she look all de worl like a big white budderfly. Ginny say she nuver see sich a givy chile; she always want to vide evy cake un cracker wid whomsouver mout be roun. She say is how one mornin she dress her in de sweetis white frock she had—she always woe white—wid de bluis ribbins to match her eyes, un she lef her jes outside de doo', wid dat same Betsy to look arter her. She had'n been gone no time, fo little Mary come in de house bedout iny frock. Miss ax her what she done wid it. She say, 'Mamma, Betsy clar she nuver see noth'n pruddy un fine is my dress, un she would be willin to gin all de candy un good things she spec to have nex Christmus, ef she had one jes like it un, Mamma, her eyes look so big un beggin, sup'n inside tole me to gin it to her.'

"Miss tell her she want her to be genous, but she mus'n gin her clo'es way no mo, dout axin her. Marse ketch her up un hug un kiss her, un tell her she shall gin way all her clo'es ef she choose, un his'n too.

"Miss low he oughtn't to spile de chile dat way, caze twill be de wuss fur her when she grow

up. But I ay see it is yit. It pear to meck her but de better. Her own goodnis wuz de wuss fur her, caze is she growed up, she were at de beck un call uv evybordy, jes like her ma, un sometimes folks pose on her. But twuz better dat way den tother, I reckon, caze, uv sich is de kingdum uv Heben. One day, sett'n in Ginny's lap, she say, 'Mammy Ginny, huccum my mamma so white un you so brown?' 'I dunno, Honey; de good Lord meck us dat a way.' She study a little while un say, 'I know: He mus a mix a heap a brown sugar wid de san' He meck you out, caze you so brown un sweet.' Ginny say she use to be always so sorry when de baby sleep all night, un she did'n have to git up wid her, caze she war see her so bad fo mornin. Dese things I speak uv, ay much, jes what crap out in my min' bout Miss Mary's childhood. An- uther time, somewhar long bout de las a February ur de fus a March, she come whar I wuz at wuck in de gyarden, un say, 'Soon de blue birds will be here, won't dey, Daddy Ben? un dey will sing un wake up de flowers, un dey will raise dey little yaller hades, un open dey priddy blue eyes, un peep at Mr. Bee is he come long; den he will stop un eat breakfus wid um, un drink out de little gole cups un saucers, won't he Daddy Ben?' Ginny look at me un shake her hade, un say, 'Ain't she de beatinis chile? When she git grown I boun she gwy writ one dem

norvil books un meck a big name fur hersef.' I grunt un tell her she doe have to writ noth'n to git dat; she got it aready."

"Grandaddy, what did you all do bedout Miss Mary when she were sarnt away to school?"

"She wor sarnt—dat is, ontwell she wuz mos grown—den she had to go to git de finishin tetches. I ay see no diffunce when she git home, scus'n de pianner playin; pear like she fall off in dat, caze de tunes ay no ways so loud un lively is dey wuz. I ay spec much uv dem finishin tetches nohow, caze she so finish fust nobordy could'n totch her. Marse always had de Governmiss fur de chillun, live in de house. I nuver gwy furgit de fus one dat took de sitivation; she try to teck de plantashun too. She wuz one dem ornreasonable, vinegry ole maids, dat wuz too sour to kotch a fly less mo a beau. She skyur evything tother way, she did. Me un Ginny say frum de fus, she wor gwy suit, un no mo'n she nuver. She had'n been wid us long fo one day Marse un Miss driv some distance to see some uv dey friens un neighbors. Soon is twuz time fur school to be over, Ginny went fur little Mary to gin her her snack, un to teck her to walk. But in de name a goodniss, what you spose dat Governmiss done? She had lock up dat chile in de room, to stay three ur fo hours, thout noth'n to eat, jes caze she miss a lesson. I always bin thankful Ginny nuver done noth'n to her,

caze when she got to me she wuz red hot un a bilin mad, un me jes de same. She say, 'Cose, Ben, I ay gwy low dat chile to stay in dar, ef'n I has to bus de doo open.' We clude to wait twell Miss Green Simmon git out de way fo we do noth'n. Dat what de servans call her hine her back, caze she lef de same feelin in yo min' dat de green simmon lef in yo mouf. She sot a heap a sto by de fresh ar fur hersef, but she lef dat little thing to pine in dat shet-up room by hersef, un not so much is a crum to eat. Arter she got out a sight, I tuck a ladder un prop tup gin de winder—twor fur frum de groun, un git in de room.

"Much is I could do to suade little Mary to come long wid me, caze she low de teacher done tole her to stay whar she wuz; I say, 'I reckon what yo ma un yo pa say bout dat cum fus, un I know dey would'n low her to be cooped up dar, same's a sick chicken.' So den I fotched her down.

"All uv we all wuz hoppin mad wid dat furrin omun, un when I tell Brer Cormwallus bout it, he nuver say much, but I see he had sup'n in he hade.

"When de Governmiss come back wid her clo'es all wet un dragglety, un sheddin water wus'n a water cyart, I knowed sup'n wuz up. She were mad is a wet hen, un wetter den inything I uver see, scusin a wet rat.

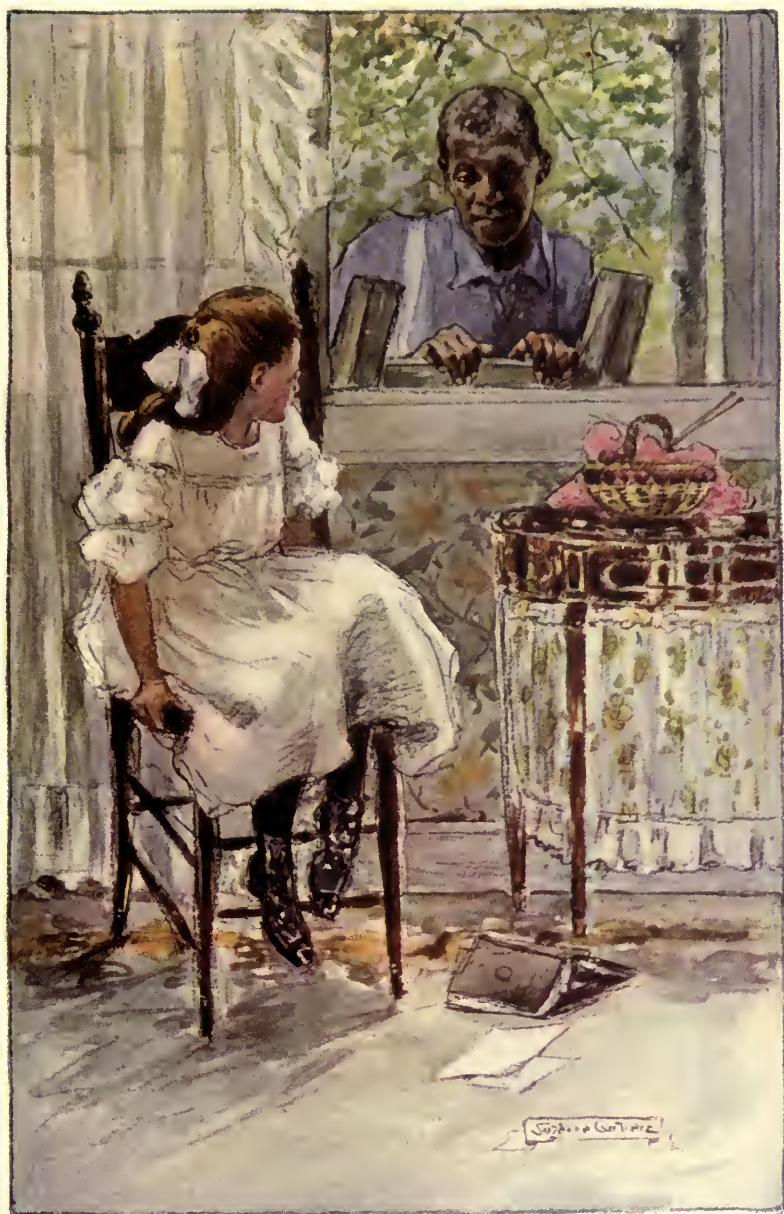
"She nuver know it, but Brer Cormwallus,

when he hyur she gone to walk, knowed she had to cross Reedy Creek fo she git home. He always were powerful foxy, so he went straight dar, un took away de rock, dat sport de plank she had to cross on. Den he hide hesef in de bushis. Cose is she got bout de middle, de plank flop down, un she fall in de water, up to her knees, un had to git out de bes way she could. She tuck her time to put on dry clo'es, un den went to let de prisner out. Soonsever she could'n fine her, she come to me wringin her hans, un axin bout de chile.

"She mout a knowed noth'n ay happen to her, while me un Ginny roun, but she done got nerbous un fidgity in her min', caze she know she done wrong, to be so tempshus wid a little chile, dat nuver bin lowed to have so much is a musquiter bite. Den agin she wuz sizlin mad wid who uver tuck Mary out. I say, 'No tellin whar she at; she mout a bin sperited away, caze dat room bin hantid, evy sense Miss Nancy die in it. She were de fambly ole maid, un tay nuver no countin fur dem.' I tell her, I know Marse gwy be turribul mad bout dat chile put in jail, un when he gits dat way tis awful. I try to skyur her haf to death. By'm by, dey git back un I meet um at de gate, un tole um all bout it. I nuver hyur what Marse say to de Governmiss, but I know one thing, she tuck hersef off de nex day. Arter she gone, little Mary wuz happy is a cricket



“Much is I could do to suade little Mary to come long wid me”



a moonshiny night. I niver know zackly how it leak out, but when Marster hear bout dat creek crossin, dey say you mout a hyurd im laugh all over de place.

“Little Mary had a heap a friens, but dar wuz one in particlar she sot mo sto by den all tothers. She were de darter uv a widder lady, dat wuz mighty nice, dough she war no ways rich is we all, but she wuz one dem rale ristorats. Is de ole sayin go, money is de root uv all evul, but I ay see nobordy spurn dat root yit, un sho’s you born, it do byar powerful sef-satyfyin, appetitin fruit. But we all niver cyur noth’n bout money, less’n twuz back up wid blue blood. Un I gwy splain to you what dat is, caze you ay niver hyur much bout it. One day de chillun wuz playin roun, un one on um fall down un hut hesef, twell de blood come. I tun so sick un pale, Ginny ax me what de marter. I tuck her to one side un ax her is she see dat chile’s blood. I say I always hyured we all white folks wuz de blue-bloodedis peoples in de worl, un hyur dat chile’s blood red is mine. I meck her promise she wo say noth’n bout it to nobordy. Sam come long un war know what dat on de chile’s clo’es. I say tay noth’n but pokeberries, he done mash on hesef. Sam one dem meddly, pryin kin’—he low twuz de redis pokeberry juice he uver see. I say, ‘Go long, nigger—dat caze you cross-eyed un cyar see straight. It look bluish to me.’ Cose I bleege

to tole dat lie. Den I went straight to Marster bout it, caze I wuz monstrus trouble in my min'. He tell me not to be orneasy, dat when you say a puss'n is blue-bloodid, it doe mean de blood is blue sho nuff, like de bluin you puts in clo'es, but dat he fo-fathers—pears like de mothers doe count—bin rale gempmun, a hundud yurs ur so.

"Ginny tell me mos evytime Miss buy nice pruddy things fur Mary, she had to git some uv de same fur her frien Miss Virginny, caze ef she did'n, Mary sho to have de pouts. Frum de time she bout leven ur twelve yurs ole, she gin to save all her money, un teck it to her pa to keep. She nuver tell nobordy, not even her ma un her mammy, what she gwy do wid it. Miss say it did'n favor de fambly to be savin like dat, un she did'n like dat kin' a varigashum. When she got ready to go to de fashiontable school to git dem finishin tetches I tole you bout, she splain to her pa is how she want Miss Virginny to go long wid her. He say he did'n think she could fode it.

"She tell im yas, she kin, caze she bin savin her money a puppus fur dat very thing. Mighty few grown folks 'ny deysef dat a way, less mo a chile, but she a Harrison. Soonsever she come home, a young lady, de beaux gin to swarm un buzz roun her, same's bees roun honey. Dar wuz always a horse at de rack ur a buggy at

de doo. She ac perlite to all on um, but she hole her hade so top-lofty, dey see she un de wile pigeon roos too high fur de sparrers."

"Grandaddy, did'n she nuver come down frum dat high perch?"

"Cose, ef'n she come a tall, it bleege to be down; she could'n riz no higher. Dey wuz de bes dar is, but twar none un um fitten to ontie de lashis uv her shoes, less mo to teck her han in de holy bouns uv weddin-lock. In dese days un times, dar ay no what you may call rale gempmun nohow, scus'n a few sich is my young Marsters, caze dey all has to wuck mo'n de servans done befo de war, un wuck sho teck off de quality, same's water teck de shine off de shoe."

"Grandaddy, did Granmammy live long arter ole Miss die?"

"Nor, Honey, when Miss lef us, Ginny sperit went wid her; un arter dat she nuver wuz de same, caze she did'n have no heart fur noth'n. De day uv de fumeral she faint clean away, un de doctor had to wuck on her a long time, fo he could bring her back. She grieve un pine, twell she loss all her strank, un war noth'n but skin un bones. Den she had to tuck to her bade. Miss Mary nuss un ten to her wid her own hans, same's she been her ma, caze she were her mammy, un she thought all de worl uv her. Ginny say, 'Honey, you could'n

be no better to me den you is, but tay no use—sense Miss is gone de worl ay de same. We wuz chillun togother un we played un growed up wid one a nother. When inything happen to me, I always went straight to her. Ef twuz sup'n to meck me happy, pears like de pledger wuz all de sweeter when I tell her bout it. Ef I wuz sick she know zackly what to do, un whensoever trouble come, twar nobordy could ease de burden like her. She wuz my Mistiss un my frien, de bes I ever had on yuth. Honey, pray you may be jes like her, un you will have peace ornspeakable. De doctor say he could'n fine no 'sease in Ginny—twor noth'n cep trouble in her min.

“One mornin she sarnt fur me un Miss Mary, un soonsever we sot eyes on her, we knowed de end wuz nigh. My little Mistiss kneel down by de bade un cry fit to break her heart. Ginny lay her han on her hade, un say, ‘Mammy little baby chile, doe cry—Mammy jes goin home. Mistiss waitin fur me up dare, un we gwy keep close to you un watch over you all de time; Honey, doe cry, caze it stress me so.’ Den she tun to me un say, ‘Ben, you always been mighty good to me, but I has to leave you now; doe grieve fur me, caze twoe be long fo you come too, un den we’ll all be togother once mo.’ Den she sing to hersef:

“‘Swing low, Sweet Chariot, come fur to carry me home;

“‘Swing low, Sweet Chariot, come fur to carry me home.’

" ' Mammy little baby chile, doe cry—Mammy jes goin home' "



“She look up un say, ‘Yes, Mistiss, I’s comin, I’s comin,’ un wid a smile on her face, she went to de promis lan. Fo we lay her to res, Miss Mary cut a bunch uv white roses from Mistiss’ bush, un lay um on her breas’. Sometimes uv nights, when de moon is swingin high in de hebens, un I stans by dat bush, pears to me I kin see Mistiss’ face, in de sweetis un whitis uv dem roses.

“Un now, Honey, you see jes how tis wid ole Ben: de summer is gone, de winter is here, un I is lef like de lone sparrer on de house top. But praise Gord, Heben ay so fur, un all I got is dar.

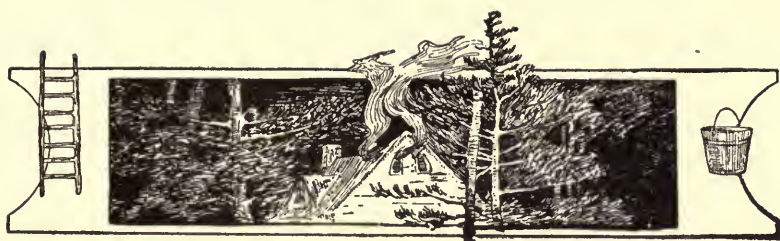
“ ‘Un when my time done cum to die,
Jes teck me back un let me lie
Close whar de Jeems goes rollin by
Down in Virginia.

“ ‘Case I believe dat happy lan
De Lord’s prepyared for mortul man,
Is built igzactly on de plan
Of ole Virginia.’



A detailed botanical illustration of a plant, possibly a species of Mimulus or a similar member of the Primulaceae family. The plant features a central, upright stem with several large, deeply crumpled or lobed leaves. At the top of the stem is a single, large, tubular flower with a flared, two-lobed corolla. A smaller, similar flower is shown on a side branch. The entire illustration is rendered in a fine-lined, engraved style. The text "Chapter XI" is superimposed over the central part of the plant.

Chapter XI



CHAPTER XI

“**Y**OU mus ay like boys much, Grandaddy, caze wid all we talkins, you ay nuver tole me nuth’n bout Marster’s sons.”

“Honey, we had de likelies pascal a boys, to be foun inywhar roun. But yit un still, boys will be boys, so cose dey’s bad, un de less you say bout um de better. De Scriptur is mo’n ap to tell de right thing, un I always tries to ’bey it. So whensomever I sees two or three boys guthered to guther, I cross over on tother side un git way quick, caze I know de devul is in de midst on um. Ef’n de boys wuz all dade de devul would sho be mighty sick.

“But I ay no’ways scrapenat’n gin boys, caze dar bleege to be boys un wile varmints un tother venmous things, on count a stroyin stray cats un green apples, un to keep de doctor’s han in wid settin uv laigs un arms un collar bones. I ay min speakin bout Marse Charles, now he dun tun out so good, but he sho were de beatinis chile uver went on two laigs, fur badniss un mischeveousniss;

not is he uver done inything mean—he jes much bove dat is me—but wharsomever dar wuz iny badniss gwine on, you may be sho he wuz right in it, un he tuck to it jes is natchul is a duck to water. He had dat bright, happy dis'sition dat always lef a streak a sunshine behine im. He pruddy nigh tormint yo life out'n you sometimes, un on top a dat, sarve you sich a outragis trick, you mos war fling im in de river; den he come long so full a fun wid dat big heart un dem kind ways a his'n un ready to hope you bout wharsomever you doin, un fus thing you know, you in jes a good humor is him, un you think to yosef, cose boys will be boys. He were wile un ornman-gable is a two-year colt, but de same mettle what meck de colt ornruly, is what give de horse de dash un de valibility.

“Could'n nobordy do noth'n wid im, scusin Miss, caze he wor fraid uv de ole Scratch hissef. But when she argify wid im bout he wile-cat ways, un de tears come in her eyes, he promise he wo do dat no mo, un he nuver nuther, but he mo'n ap to do sup'n wuss.

“He spen mos uv he time out a school wid de horses, un dey all know im un love im same's human. Arter he ole nuff Marse low im to breck all de mules on de place. Pear like he made uv Injun Rubber; when dey rar un charge, un fling im bout, he bounce up un on um, bedout a scratch. It put me in min' uv dem cow boys out Wes, but I ay

zackly ornderstan huccum dey ride so good, wid noth'n but cows to larn on. He teacher were monstros fond on im, so one Sadday mornin, Marse Charles vite im to teck a ride wid im. He were on he own fine-speritid horse, un arter dey done gone a little way, he ax im to change horses, jes to see how nice his'n went. Cordin to dat he done it, but fo dey git fur, Marse Charles horse wheel roun, un jump up in de ar, rarin un buckin, orntwell he flung dat teacher clean over he hade. Is he did'n move nor git up, Marse Charles went to im, un see he were knocked orn-sensible. He jump on de horse un flewed like de win, twell he fotched de doctor. By de time dey got back de teacher done come to, but he arm were bruck in two places. Dat boy wuz so strestid, it meck you sorry to see im. He went like a man, un tole de teacher dat twuz all his fault—he nuver would a knowed ef he hadn't—dat he done larn de horse to do dat trick when he totch im in a tickler place. He low he know he gwy frow im, but he nuver spicion he would be hurtid. Twar noth'n but chile's play to Marse Charles to git pitched over a horse's hade. We all wuz skyured to death bout what Marster gwy do to Marse Charles, caze he were powerful outdone bout it.

“Dick, he Marse Charles' shadder, un he bin followin im roun, uver sense he could walk. Dey clum trees, breck up bird nesis, went fishin un

huntin, un always toguther. When de news spread bout what done happen, he tuck off mos all he clo'es, un went straight to de house fur to see Marster. He say, 'Marster, I war splain dat bizniss to you, sar. I were de one dat skyur de horse, un breck de gempmun's arm, sar. Ornbeknownst to Marse Charles I were hid in de bushis, un when dey rid long I jumps up un skyur de horse, un he whirl roun un done de mischuf. Marster, please, sar, put dat blame on me, which am de guilty one, un spyar Marse Charles. He skin ay thick un tough is mine, un tay gwy hut me so much, sar. Sides, Marster, evybordy say he teck arter you in dem frolicky nice ways, en ef'n you gin im sich tricks, sar, cose you ay gwy whup im fur it, sar. I know Marse Charles better'n you does, sar, un I ay so much is uver see im hut a fly, but I is see im git out de way uv a worrum, less'n he tread on it. Marster, I's hyur to teck whatsoever you got fur Marse Charles, but please, sar, doe totch him.' Evybordy know Dick wor nigh de place when it all happen. But dar wor a cullured puss'n on de plantashun, what would'n a tole a lie to git Marse Charles out a trouble. Un twor so sil-dum dey had it to do nuther. Wid we all, he were de privdidge cyarictur.

"I member one day in de early spring, me'n Peter wuz wuckin in de pea patch. We done pyar de groun fine, un mos nice nuff to

eat fur de early English peas. Marse Charles come long, he did, un ax me to let im hope to plant um. He were mighty handy bout sich things, so I went long bout sup'n else, un lef dem two to do it. De peas come up nice un thick, un look like dey promis a fine crap. I chuckle inside when I think how I gwy git ahade a dat black nigger crost de river, lawyer Gray's gardner. Evy yur me'n him run a race bout de fus early vegables, un I always beat im, caze I ornstans my bizniss. But when twuz time fur um to bloom, dar wor nary sign uv a bud, un when we all ought a bin eatin English peas, dey jes gin to bud. It bother me so I could'n sleep, caze we all use to havin de fus un de finis un de fambly spec it uv me. It mos meck me sick to think dat man gwy gin he white folks peas fo ourn git iny. But I know he had me dis time. I ax Peter bout it, but I did'n git no satyfacshum. I splain to Miss dat de seed wuz right, un de groun jes de same, un how I mighty tickler un painful to plant um on de right uv de moon. I tell her de owls mout a pester dem peas, but mos evy night, I bin out wid a shot gun, un ay see none. Miss say, 'Ben, what could owls do to peas?' 'Sholy, Miss, tis ornpssible you bin in de worl dis long un ay know dat. Dem night birds is mighty hanty un misterisome things. Ef'n a hootin owl fly over a pea patch fo dey come up, it ruinate de crap, caze it meck um backuds un barren, wid no yieldins cep vines.'

"Is we wuz a talkin bout de misfortnit crap. Marse Charles come up, un buss out laughin. He say, 'Daddy Ben, at dis season we ginully has lam' en peas, but now we seem to be havin noth'n but lam-entations.' He always sayin he foolishniss, but I ay see noth'n to laugh at. Den he up un tole Miss dat, jes fur a joke on me, he plant sweet peas, stidder de right kine. Dat boy spile de whole crap a early peas, un gin dat nigger de gloryfyin uv hesef over my morticashums, jes to play a trick on me.

"By de time Miss got fru wid im, I spec de joke wuz mos much on him is me, un I sho his peas war so sweet is dey wuz. I clar fo grashus, I were dat mad I did'n cyur what dey done to im. Long todes Easter, one night, he cum to my house, to fotch me a box a sto' chawin terbaccer. When I hyur he done spen all he Easter money fur it, I bleege to let it heal up things twix us, un meck de peace. Den twor nigh so bad arter dey tell me dat black nigger over yonder done loss all he peas too, caze de cows got in de gyarden one night un clean out de whole crap.

"But Marse Charles wuz same's good middlin, a streak a lean un a streak a fat. Wid him twuz a streak a good un a streak a bad, wid de bad a leetle overlappin de good. But when you spose de wrongniss uv inybordy, tay noth'n but even han jestis to tun im roun un show up tother side. One

mornin, Marse Charles wuz gwine over to see Miss Virginny; fo he got to de house, he see a heaper smoke up on de hill, un he know sup'n wuz wrong, so he put spurs to he horse un run im evy step uv de way, twell he he got dar. Sho nuff one wing uv de house wuz in a light blaze, un evybordy stanin roun gazin un fussin, bedout doin noth'n to put 'tout. Quick un I kin tell, Marse Charles order evybordy to fill up evything dat could hole water, un stan in a line un pass de bucket to him, arter he got on de roof.

"Dey all beg him not to ventur on dat bunnin roof, un tell im twuz much is he life wuz wuth. He nuver stop to listen, but up he went, wid de smoke un fire all roun im. Dick look mighty wishful un arter a little while, pear like he could'n stan it no longer, so he foller him, like he bin always doin, un den you could see bofe un um wuckin same's a steam injun. When de water un de wet blankits gin to squench de flames, mo men went up to hope, un arter a hour or so, dey seed in savin de house. When dat chile come down,—he war no mo'n sebenteen—he were so zaustid fo he retch de groun, he drap in a dade faint. He hyar were swunged off, un he hans so bu'nt un blistered, he had to be fed same's a baby. Marse Ginul Jackson, when dey name him de Stonewall, wor no braver den dat boy, when he fit dem roarin flames all by hesef, un whar older men den him dars'n go.

"We wuz all mighty proud on him, un when we git him home, Marster put he arm roun im, un tell im he glad he ac like he done, 'fur greater love have no man dat he gin he life fur he friens.' Marster know de Scriptur bettern de preachers, caze he doe have to look in de book, when he talk it.

"When Marse Charles git ole nuff to go to collige, twuz a heaper scussion bout whar he gwine. Marse low he blieve twould be better to sen im Norf, caze it mout stidy un cool down he hot Soufern blood. I say to mysef, 'Yas, tis like de frigater: tis a mighty good place to friz un stiffin you, but it teck all de tase un natchul symtums out'n you.'

"Marse Charles ay cyur much one way nur tother, caze when you young un light-hearted you cyarries de pledgyur wid you, but arter you ole un crepid, un yo heart is dry un withered, pear like evything gits dimmer un dimmer. De sunlight fade to moonlight, de moonlight to starlight un den dar ay no light 'tall cep what de good Lord lef in de hearts uv dem dat trus in Him. We all nuver know what Marse Charles wuz to de plantashun, twell arter he gone. Den seem like de pot stop bilin, un twuz same's somebordy dade, scusin de satyfacshum uv de fumeral. De horses un de dorgs miss im much is we all.

"By'm by we gits mighty churful letters un

good counts bout what he doin up dar. He seem to like evything un evybordy mighty well, cep one uv de teachers, Fesser Bald were he name. Marse Charles low he did'n think bout noth'n but money, un seem like he wor so tickler how he got it. Now we all wor use to sich is dem, we wuz born to money, un nuver try to meck it, so's we did'n loss it.

"Things went long smooth twell well nigh Easter; den come a tellingraph to Marster, dat he better come on, caze Marse Charles done git in trouble. Twuz all in de papers un dis wuz de marter: Seem like Marse Charles writ a letter to Fesser Bald, wid de name uv Miss Hair to it, un sarnt a mighty pruddy pictur uv her long wid it. She tell im in de letter, her home is in de Souf, dat she hyur how much hade larnin he got, un how high he stan, dat she am rich un would like to marry sich is him, ef'n bofe sides could come to a greeunce. Den de cordinsporndunce degin. Marse Charles had a frien in de Souf, in collidgum wid im, bout sendin de letters backards un forruds. De Fesser were satyfried dat things rong fix up all right twix um, un jes fo Easter, he gin it out dey gwy marry at dat time.

"Den is de weddin presunts gin to come in, he got de up-sott'n letter. I disremember what it say—but Ginny cut 'tout, un put it way in de draw dar; you kin git it un read it to me ef'n you choose, Honey."

"Well, Grandaddy, dis de way it go:

"Dear Mr. Bald:

"I did'n know how much was expected of me when I promised to supply you with hair. I now find that your *head* is as *bald* as your *name*, and as hair and Bald must, in the nature of things, ever be at variance, I have concluded that it is better for you to remain Hairless and happy than that you should be cumbered with

"Your false

"Hair."

"It leak out dat Marse Charles were at de bot-tum uv de biziniss, un dar wuz a pruddy hot kittle a fish un a big to-do bout it, I tell you.

"Dey had im up befo de bode, un dey say is he stood dar, wid some dem fessers mad nuff to kill im un tothers mos bustin to laugh, dat he were jes is cool is a curcumber in de bottum uv a bubblin spring. He knowlidge de corn, un say twuz all a joke, dat mebbe he cyar it too fur, un ef'n he did, he ax de gempmun pardon. Dar wuz a heaper talk bout spellin im.

"Fesser Bald say twar nary town in de country big nuff to hole bofe on um, dat ef'n Marse Charles stay he would lef. I dunno bout him, but Marse Charles stay, twell he time were out. Marster wuz jes de man fur de 'casion, caze he sich a born gempmun, he po fofe de olive ile frum de olive branch a peace, un de trouble waters cease.

"In dem good ole decent times, ef'n inybody

dars'n so much is teck a lady's name in vain, un spose it fo de public, one uv de nighis uv her men kin wuz jes is sho to fit a juel is de sun were to riz. Now, frum de garrut to de sullen, dar ay no secrits in de bosum uv de fambly. Ef'n a lady so much is ax a frien to sot at her table, de fuss thing de nex mornin, she see in dem scanlous society papers, what she had to eat, how twuz cooked, un what she pay fur it; sometimes dey doe even lef out de butler. I ay no ways hintin noth'n gin de ladies. I better raise den dat. But I hyur tell is how, in dey own parlor wid dey compny, dey acshully scussis de stealins un meanniss uv servans. Twor so wid my Mistiss. I jes soon spec to see her took a drink or chaw terbaccer, is to scuss de short-cumins or de long-cumins nuther uv her servans. She were too high fur sich is dat.

"When Marse Charles come home frum collige, he were dat hansum un dardevilish, dey call im a reglar lady-killer. But he wor studyin bout none on um. He low he wor nuver gwy marry, ontwell he could fine somebordy hansum un sweet is he mother un Miss Mary. Marster say, 'Den you be ole is Mister Methuseler fus.' Dat huccum Marse Charles ole batchler now, caze cose twor none on um he could'n a had fur de axin.

"I hyur is how he un Miss Virginny is co'ten one anuther. Well, mos iny man bleege to git kotch, when all de ladies in love wid im un arter

im. But dar's many a slip twix de cup un de mouf, un in sich marters, dar ay no cup slipry is Marse Charles. Miss Virginny is mighty nice, un I sayin noth'n gin er, mo'n she ay good nuff fur Marse Charles; but arter he gin her he name, un she cum in our fambly, I spec she'll do.

"But eben ole age have some vantigis."

"What dat, Grandaddy?"

"I wo live to hope raise no mo little Charlesis—dey's too mischeevius un worrysome. Arter he sow he wile oats, thick un broadcastid, he settle down to fight gin de flesh un de devul, un now he reapin a rich harvis frum de good seed Miss sow in de hearts uv all her chillun. Dey rise up un call her blessid, un her friens un servans rise up un call her blessid, un I reckon de angels bless her too, is she pass fru dem pearly gates.

"Little Ginny, in de name a sense what you meck all dat mess in hyur fur, wid all dem papers scatter roun? Evy time I come in lately, you got dat pen in you han stidder a broom ur a kittle; pears like de mos learnin you gits at school is how to write yo name; un less'n you 'have yosef un do right, de sigimication is but de wusser."

"Grandaddy, I know sup'n gwy sprise you so twill meck yo hyar stan on een, un ef'n you promise not to cut up no shines, mebbe I mout tell you."

"I ay promis you noth'n, caze you is too outdacious un disrespecable. Talk bout me cuttin

up shines, same's I a mule! Whar yo manners at? But tis jes dat freedum a crapin out, un I doe spec no better."

"Grandaddy, I clar fo gracious I nuver went fur to meck you mad. I jes war tole you what Miss Mary say. Evy mornin while I waitin on her, I tell her bout dem good ole times we bin talkin bout dese long winter nights. She low I mus member evything you say, un writ it down, un she gwy put it in a book un public it."

"Gal, what dat you say? is you gone clean stractid? Miss Mary ay gwy do no sich a thing, caze she cyar meck no book out a me. I's a specable man, un always hole myself bove gitt'n mix up mid newspapers un print un all dem scanlous things. I ay nuver see no nigger's name in print yit. scus'n he done sup'n mean, caze ef'n he 'have hesef, tay no mo'n he ought er do, so cose dar ay no notis tuck on it. I dunno what meck Miss Mary study bout doin sich a outlandish thing is dat, less'n she done git tetched wid freedum hersef. When dat teck hole on you seem like it driv all spornsibility niss out'n you, un mo'n ap to lef you high un dry."

"Grandaddy, she say cultured folks ay got no notion how things use to wuz, when de bes white folks in de worl wuz we-all's friens."

"Well, Honey, Miss Mary got a heap a sense, un mebbe she right, but I hope she ay gwy mis-grace me too much. Caze it go mighty hard

wid me, fur to be one dem no-count public cyar-
aricturs. Arter I dade un gone twill be time
a nuff to put me in de print. When de een
come un I hand in my las rickerdashuns, de bes
I kin say fur mysef, 'I wuz Mistiss' faithful Hade
Gardner, in dem good ole times befo de war.' "





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